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THE JEWISH SPY:

BEING A
PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL and
CRITICAL *Correspondence*,

By LETTERS

Which lately pass'd between certain *J E W S*
in *Turky, Italy, France, &c.*

Translated from the ORIGINALS into *French*,

By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS;
And now done into English.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. III.



L O N D O N :

Printed for D. BROWNE, without *Temple-Bar*; R. HETT,
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TO THE


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RABBIES

OF THE

SYNAGOGUE *at* Amsterdam.

GENTLEMEN,

 A M fully conscious of my
Rashness in presuming to
offer you so defective a
Translation as this must appear to
You, who so perfectly understand
the *Hebrew* Language, and are so
well acquainted with its Beauties.

A 2

But

iv DEDICATION.

But in Consideration of my Zeal and Good-will, I hope you will pardon all its Faults. Such as it is, I make bold to present it to You, being encourag'd, however, by this one Consideration, *viz.* that I dedicate it to You *gratis*, without Expectation of any Reward; and knowing, that what costs nothing is always very well receiv'd, especially by the *Israelites*.

IT would, therefore, be a Kind of Injustice in You, to censure a Book which will, from henceforward, make You known throughout *Europe*. 'Tis true that Your Nation in general is not so covetous of Praise, as of Pelf. But after all, since there happen to be three such honest Men of it, as the Writers of these *Letters*, 'tis

not

DEDICATION. v

not morally impossible but there may be a fourth in it, and I dare say, many more.

THEY who imagine that a Man cannot be a *Jew* without being a little knavish; and that *Israelites*, *Usurers* and *Robbers* are synonymous Terms, carry the Point too far: For 'tis no rash Judgment to pronounce, That there are in the World, perhaps ten *Jesuits* that are *humble*, ten *Gascons* that are *modest*, ten *Italian* Prelates that are Men of *Learning*, ten *English* ones that are good *Christians*, ten *Venetians* that are *devout*, ten *Spaniards* that are not *superstitious*, and ten *Sicilian* Prelates that can read: Why then may there not be ten such *Jews* as AARON MONCECA, JACOB BRITO and ISAAC ONIS?

IF

vi DEDICATION.

IF Your Nation is not so virtuous in general as some others, it has, however, had its able Men, and its great Men, as well as those.

GLAD that I can do more Justice than they who judge of it with so much Prejudice and Partiality, I am very sincerely,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Humble, and

most Obedient Servant,

The Translator of the
LETTRES JUIVES.



The AUTHOR's
General PREFACE
TO THE
Whole WORK.

IF I had pleas'd, I might have spar'd myself the Trouble of writing a General Preface. Those which are at the Beginning of the several Volumes are sufficient to confute the insipid Criticisms, and childish Objections, of such as have pretended to censure me. On the other hand, the Approbation with which the Public has favour'd me, seems to have made a fuller Answer the less necessary; and indeed, it would be some sort of Discredit to the Success which this Work has met with, to enter into the Defence of it against certain wretched Stainers of Paper, Men as ignorant of Letters as they are a Scandal to civil Society, and whose base Reproaches can never do me any Harm with Mankind, tho' they have been to the last Degree impudent, and have invented the vilest of Calumnies to render me odious and contemptible. I have,
A. 4. therefore,

therefore hitherto scorn'd to confute them, and to expose their Villainy to the View of all Mankind. But it will not be improper, that, in one Particular, I should just prove their Forgery. They have had the Audaciousness to accuse me of having quitted the Service, for being a Debauchee and a Libertine; and this impudent Calumny they have circumstanc'd with fifty insulting Particulars. To shew what a Lye this is, I here give a Copy of a Certificate; of which, such as have a Mind, may see the Original in the Hands of the Bookseller, for whom these Letters are printed †.

We, the underwritten Captains in the Regiment of *Richelieu*, do certify to all whom it may concern, that the *MARQUIS d'ARGENS* serv'd as a Captain in our Regiment, during the whole Campaign of *Philipsburg* in 1734; and that after the Campaign was over, he quitted the said Regiment by reason of his Infirmities, and a Fall that disabled him from continuing in the Service: And that he left it with the Consent of the Duke *de Richelieu*, and the Esteem, and Friendship of all his Comrades, is what we certify with great Pleasure.

Sign'd at *Maubeuge* the 11th of *March* 1738, and seal'd with the Seal of the Regiment.

Lumajour, Major,
The Chevalier d' *Ariffac*,
La Tour,
D' *Argenson*,
The Chevalier de *Luma-*
jour,
Rayne,
Tirson,
Mejenville,
The Chevalier d' *Artignose*,

La Rouzet, Commandant
of the third Battalion,
La Laudelle,
Gulchen,
Le Gras,
Salha,
d' *Esguille*,
Maynard,
Richebour,
Vaugelas

If my base Slanderers were capable of entertaining any Sentiments of Honour, would not they sink under the Confusion of being convicted as the most dishonourable Persons living? But can any Remorse be expected in such Men? This would be to require an Impossibility. Shame is no Quality for Men of their Kidney. I am sensible that I disparage myself in spending so many Words about them: But my Readers will excuse it; for Necessity has compell'd me to expose the Character, Birth and Probity of those Hackney-Scriblers, who have, without any Cause, been let loose against me.

'Tis true, that I ought not to range all my Critics in the same Class. There are some who have writ with more Caution, tho' if one were to expunge all that's invective out of their Works, above one Half would be suppress'd. I cannot help smiling, when I consider what vain Efforts have been made by five or six diminutive Authors, to stop the Currency of these Letters. The eager and great Demand for them seems to have rais'd their Choler. Weary of employing open Force, they have had recourse to Cunning; and, finding that their miserable Criticisms were justly despis'd by the Public, they have in some sort shelter'd themselves under the Names of the truly Learned, tho' they have been Foels for their Pains, since the Mischief which they aim'd to do me has procur'd me more substantial Honour than I could have expected.

Some time ago, there came out a very dull Rhapsody against this Work, in that call'd Bibliotheque Germanique; upon which the illustrious and learned M. de Beaufobre, whose Merit is as much respected as his vast Fund of Knowledge and Learning is admir'd by all Europe, did me the Favour to send me the following Letter.

SIR,

I was very much surpriz'd and mortify'd to find a Letter in the XIth *Tome* of the *Bibliothèque Germanique*, by way of Criticism on one of your *Lettres ſuivies*. As it is well known that I have a Hand in that Journal, you might be apt to imagine, Sir, that I was alſo concern'd in the Publication of that Letter: Therefore, I am oblig'd to acquaint you that this Piece was ſoisted into the *Bibliothèque* without my Knowledge. The long Illneſs I have had ever ſince the Beginning of the laſt Autumn, has prevented me from giving any Attention to the Journal, ſo that I only ſent to it the IXth Section of the Answer to the Journaliſts *de Trevoux*, without troubling myſelf with any thing more. If I had any Obſervations to make upon your Works, I would communicate them to you, Sir, to make what Uſe of them you thought fit. Theſe are the Regards juſtly due to an Author, who, like you, has Wit at Will, and to whom the Public is oblig'd for Compoſitions that are perfectly entertaining and inſtructive. Continue, Sir, to merit the Eſteem of Men of Honour that have a right Notion of Truth and Elegance. You have acquir'd all mine, &c.

Berlin, Feb. 15,
1738.

De BEAUSOBRE.

How much oblig'd am I to the Underſtrapper who cauſ'd that Piece to be inserted in the Bibliothèque Germanique, wherein he pretended to run down my Works, ſince it procures me what I ſhould have thought nothing too dear to purchaſe! Having, for a long time conſider'd M. de Beaufobre as a Man of
the

the most capacious and solid Genius in Europe, I always thought his Esteem of infinite Value; but perhaps I should never have known the Extent of his Complaisance for my weak Talents, had it not been for my Critic. I must own, that if ever I had any Tincture of Vain-glory, it was at the first Reading of his Letter. But this is a Vanity very excusable; and if Boileau put such a Value upon the Letter which M. Arnaud wrote to him, that he was willing to have it engrav'd upon his Tomb, what Pleasure ought I not to feel in that of M. de Beaufobre, a Divine as great as Arnaud, a Critic as learned as Bayle, and an Historian as sincere and correct as Thuanus! In short, one single Talent of his is sufficient to form a great Man. I would fain know what Mortal could be insensible of the Approbation of a Personage so illustrious and so respected, not only in the Republic of Letters, but by all Men of Worth and Judgment. May all the Novices of Parnassus write more Rhapsodies against me than Pradon and Bonecorse ever wrote against Boileau, provided the Uneasiness they may give me for a little while is repair'd by a never-dying Fame! Hereafter I should think myself unworthy of the Honour which I have receiv'd, if I gave the least Heed to People so foolish and ridiculous, and upon whom I cannot take a sweeter Revenge than by shewing a hearty Contempt for them.

In this Class I place the Journalists de Trevoux, whose Dishonesty is known to all the World. What Good can one possibly expect from three Jesuits charg'd by their Order to defend all the Iniquities of the Society? If they look into their own Breasts, they must say they have neither Honour nor Probity. This is what has been prov'd upon them over and over;

over; but nothing could ever make the Forehead of a Jesuit blush, except his Mortification that he is not able to hurt his Enemies: Consequently there's no Lye which those Journalists don't invent, no Knavery to which they have not recourse for carrying their Point. I shall not here return any Answer to their coarse Invectives against me, but refer my Readers to the Preface of my 4th Volume, and to the Letter wherein they are mentioned in the 2d †. In both these Places the Reader will find Matter whereon to ground his Judgment of the Divinity of those Reverend Fathers who have had the Impudence to accuse me of Deism; because while I was exposing certain Frauds of the Friars to Ridicule, I likewise pass'd a Joke upon their own.

Quoi ! L'Etat de Jesuits est il si glorieux,
Qu'on ne puisse en parler sans offenser des Deux?

i. e.

*Is there due to the Jesuits
So much Veneration,
That they cannot be nam'd
Without God's Indignation?*

Well might one of our best Writers say, ‘ Such are the Times now, that if you fall upon any Monk of an Author who has Interest at Court, or Credit with the Magistrates, he is sure of obtaining Lettres de Cachet, or Arrets, to sentence you to Banishment, as if it was a Quarrel of State or Reli-

† Letter XLII.

gion.

' *gion. Quasi illud Respublica esset *.*' I have found this true by Experience; and the Bigots and Friars have left no Stone unturn'd to incense the whole World against me. But if they knew how I laugh at and despise their feeble Malice, they would cease their vain Clamour. Being a Philosopher, much more by Constitution than by Study, nothing can give me any Uneasiness but the secret Stings of Conscience. Now there is no Principle, no Maxim in the *Lettres Juives*, but what I am firmly persuaded is very agreeable to the Rules of Honour and Probity, and becoming an honest and a Virtuous Subject. That Submission which is due to the Powers that God has set over us, appears almost in every Page, and the Respect for the very Persons of Sovereigns is strenuously inforc'd. All the moral Qualities are therein display'd in their full Lustre, and my Sentiments are justify'd by the Approbation of the Public who judge without Passion.

The *Invectives* of the Bigots have made so little Impression upon Persons of Honour and Rank, that several Monarchs have sent to assure me of their Protection, if I had a mind to retire into their Dominions. 'Tis hardly three Months since one of the most illustrious and most venerable and amiable Princes in Germany, the Brother of a great King, whose Virtues are as transcendant as his Birth, made answer to a Person of Distinction, who had writ to him upon my Account, that if I had any Thoughts of settling in his Country, I should enjoy his Protection there in its fullest Extent. My Health did not permit me to be so happy as to go and thank him for his Favours,

* *Amelot de la Houssaie's Annals of Tacitus*, lib. iv. p. 288. Political Reflections.

but oblig'd me to settle in another Climate; mean time, where-ever I go, I defy the Hatred of the Hypocrites, Bigots, and indeed of all my Enemies, whom I therefore advise to be quiet, and not to torment themselves to no purpose.

I think what I have now said is sufficient for my Justification; which how tedious soever it may seem to the Readers, they will perceive it was necessary. The more Favour they have shewn to my Works, the greater Hopes I have of seeing them transmitted to Posterity; by Consequence therefore I ought to clear myself of the Calumnies laid to the Charge of their Author, it being impossible for the Reader to have a true relish for a Book whose Writer is not a Person in Credit.

But how kindly soever the Public has receiv'd this Piece, I am far from thinking it a faultless one. If there be any thing in it more commendable than other, and which distinguishes it from most of the modern Performances, 'tis the bold Appearance that Truth makes in it. I have not been afraid to declare my Sentiments bluntly of all the Abuses which I thought destructive of Society: I have not only condemn'd Superstition, Fanaticism, Hypocrisy, and Knavery; but have taken off the Mask from such as craftily make those Vices their Tools to attain to their own Ends, and who sacrifice the Welfare and Happiness of the Public to their private Interest. That's the Provocation which has rais'd me such a Number of Enemies: Hinc prima mali Labes. But was it to increase every Day, nothing can force me to be wanting in the Respect which I owe to my Countrymen. The only Motive of my Writing was to be useful to them. Ought I then to have disguis'd the Truth?

*Truth? I have declar'd it boldly, and will always
speak my Mind.*

*Et si fractus illabatur Orbis,
Impavidum ferient Ruinæ.*

Hor. Lib. III. Od. 3.*

*After all, I am oblig'd, both as a Gentleman and
a Philosopher, to confess that I had no Intention to
disgust the BARON de POLLNITZ, by taking No-
tice as I did, in my Dedication to the second Volume,
that he had been an Abbé. I thought he would,
take it only as a Joke, but I have heard the con-
trary; and as I have all due Respect for the Birth
and Merit of the BARON de POLLNITZ, I am
very glad to make this public Acknowledgment that
no body is more convinc'd than myself how worthy
he is of the Esteem of all Men of Honour. For my
own part, I have particular Obligations to him
which I ought never to forget; and so have my
Readers, who, but for him, perhaps would never
have had the Lettres Juives; because he was the
Man that pacify'd the Governor of Rome and other
Priests, who were very much exasperated against me,
and two very honest good-natur'd Swiss Gentlemen,
for talking too freely of the Pope's Slippers and the
Miracles of St. James Shake-horse. There was not
a Person of Quality at Rome but what was fond
of the BARON de POLLNITZ. The Pope also gave
him an Apartment in his Palace; and I have seen him*

* Should Nature with Convulsions shake,
Struck with the fiery Bolts of Jove,
The final Doom, and dreadful Crack,
Cannot my constant Courage move.

Translated by Mr. Creech.

very often at Monte-Cavallo, where his Holiness resides *. I do this German Nobleman the Justice that he deserves, with the more Pleasure, because I have the Satisfaction to think, that no other private Person can complain of me, and am sure that tho' I blame the Faults of Men, I have avoided, as much as possible, to enter into Personalities, which are odious and disgusting.

* This is the Gentleman who wrote those MEMOIRS of the chief Courts and Cities of *Europe*, in four Volumes; which were lately translated for *D. Browne*, and dedicated to the Right Honourable the Lord HARDWICKE, the Lord HIGH CHANCELLOR of *Great Britain*. Its Author, who was well esteem'd by the late King of *Prussia*, has the Happiness also to be a Favourite with his present Majesty; who has left it to him to regulate the Funeral Obsequies of his Royal Father, and has appointed him *Master of the Ceremonies* at his Court.

Remark by the Translator.





THE
JEWISH SPY.

LETTER LXXXI.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraite at Cairo,
to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

I Shall now endeavour to give thee a more clear and regular Account than I did in my last of those antient Inhabitants of *Egypt* the *Coptes*. This People embrace the Doctrine of one *Eutyches*, who is by the *European* *Nazarenes* reckon'd a famous Arch-heretic. They are wretchedly poor, and all that are left of 'em, who are still pretty numerous, have nothing to subsist on but the Registers they keep of all the arable Lands, which is a Privilege they retain, and have always claim'd, on account of their Antiquity; so that there's hardly a Landholder in *Turky*, but has a *Coptic* Writer, who keeps a particular Register of all the Lands he possesses.

The *European Nazarenes*, at this Place, say, that the *Coptes* are the most stupid People in the World, and the most obstinate in their Error. But I must tell thee, that I have talk'd with many of 'em, and don't find, that they are more attach'd than all other Men are, to the Opinions they have suck'd with their Milk. I know not with what Propriety an *European Nazarene* can charge a *Coptic Nazarene* with Obstinacy. For they have both the same Failing, or the same Virtue, call it which thou wilt, because they have both the same Fondness for the Prejudices which they were born with. The *Europeans* upbraid the *Coptes* for *adhering blindly to their antient Customs, which they call Canons, and for setting up the Opinions of their Bishops and their Priests, as the only Rules of their Faith and Practice.* Is not this the Sentiment also of all the *Nazarenes*? When their Pontiffs have made a Decision, do they not implicitly submit to it? Do they not own, that 'tis not lawful for them to dispute the Validity of the Decisions of those Assemblies which they call *Councils*? Why should they pretend to require from the *Coptes* what they don't practise themselves? For what Reason is an *Egyptian* more oblig'd to doubt of the Decision of his Pontiff, and to examine it before he believes it, than a *Nazarene*?

It cannot be deny'd, that in all Religions there are honest Men. A *Nazarene* thinks, that his Religion does not permit him to examine it, and to judge of it by Reason. The *Copte* is in the very same Way of Thinking, and is as much convinc'd of the Learning and Candor of his Pontiffs, as the *Nazarene* is of his. They ought therefore, according to their own Principles, to keep both to their respective Creeds, without examining or disputing them; and 'tis ridiculous for either of the two

to require of the other what he condemns himself.

This is, in my Opinion, the grossest Error in the *Nazarene Popish Religion*. Reason, and the Light of Nature, which are the Gifts of Heaven for Men to walk by, become of no Service to them. As soon as a Pontiff has declar'd his Opinion, all is over, there's an End of the Dispute: People are not allow'd to examine what appears sometimes notoriously repugnant to good Sense, and they have nothing to do but to submit.

The *Nazarenes* are fully sensible of the Ridiculousness of this Conduct; they tax People who are tainted with this Prejudice, with Stupidity and Obstinacy; and are so blind, that they don't consider, that all the Reproaches and Arguments which they employ against their Adversaries, are so many Weapons which they furnish them with against themselves. They take it ill, that the *Coptes* should plead the Example of their Ancestors, to authorize certain Customs. *Are we, say those People, wiser than our Ancestors? They believ'd as we believe; why should not we imitate them*?* The *Missionaries*, the *Jesuits*, and the *Nazarene* Friars, complain very much of such Talk, and call it the last Refuge of Ignorance. *Nothing, say they, can force this Intrenchment cast up by Obstinacy. 'Tis a Buckler, which the keenest Arrows of Reasoning cannot penetrate.*

I would fain ask those *Missionaries*, upon what they ground almost all their Customs and Ceremonies. They would not fail to quote Tradition to me, of which none make more use than the *Nazarene* Papists. 'Tis their great War-horse, and by means of this they get out of all Difficulties, of which there's none so bad but may easily be solv'd by the Help of Tradition. How unjust is it for Men to

* *Mallet's Relation of Egypt*, Part ii. p. 63.

go to deprive others of Privileges, which they so bountifully grant to themselves! What! shall it be lawful in *Europe* to authorize a Custom, nay to consecrate it, how ridiculous soever, as soon as 'tis approv'd by the Antients? and shall the same way of Thinking be prohibited in *Africa*, on Pain of being censur'd as stupid and headstrong? If any Man can shew me a Reason for this Prejudice, I am ready to embrace the Opinion of the *Nazarenes*; but 'till then I pity both them and the *Coptes* for their Blindness; nay, I think the *Europeans* the more contemptible, because they are not a jot the wiser themselves for the Ridiculousness which they perceive in the Opinions of the others.

'Tis however certain, dear *Monceca*, that the *Coptes* are a sorry People. They often make a scandalous Traffic of their Religion, and for a small Sum of Money several of 'em will enter into the *Nazarene* Communion, and abandon it as soon as their Interest and Hopes begin to fail. They have a Proverb among them which says, *Maphis Fellou, Maphis Quenisse*, * i. e. No Money, no Church; so that the Conversions of the *Coptes* are upon the same footing as the Service of the *Switzers*; *No Money, no Swiss*. It signifies nothing to tell them, that they are going to plunge themselves again in Heresy; they return quietly to their antient Church, and give no other Reason for what they do, but that they pray'd in the *Romish* Way as long as they were paid for it, and that more than this they were not oblig'd to. Judge thou from hence of the Fruit and Progress of those Missions, so much boasted in *Europe*. All the *Franks* that are here own, that never was there a *Copte* who dy'd out of his own Religion, and that sooner or later they all return to it. Nay, 'tis ridiculous to think that it can happen otherwise,

considering the Hatred and Contempt which they have for the Faith of the *European Nazarenes*; for from their Infancy they are entertain'd with no Discourse, but what is for the Disadvantage of the Religions that are contrary to their own; they are inspired with a Hatred to all foreign Opinions; and 'tis impossible for them ever to conquer those Prejudices.

In *Europe* there are Ways of enlightening the Mind; the Sciences are of very great Service to free Reason from the Fetters that keep it in Captivity. By studying, Men are taught to doubt; and Doubting naturally leads to a Search after Truth. In *Egypt* profound Ignorance gives new Force to Prejudices, and renders them even invincible: And, as Superstition and Ignorance always go together, the most ridiculous Fables, and the most whimsical Customs, pass with those blind People for Miracles.

The *Coptes*, as well as the *Nazarenes*, believe, that their Priests, by pronouncing certain Words, have a Power to wipe out all Sins; but they don't, like the others, make a particular Confession of their Faults to their Priests, and only accuse themselves in general of the Sins they have committed, in Thought, Word and Deed. Then the Priest pronounces this Word, *Allahieramae**; and the Ceremony is over, on paying a small Sum of Money, by the Person who is cleans'd from all Sin, to him who did him that Service. The *Coptic* Priests are as covetous and selfish as the *European Monks*; so that Avarice seems to be a Vice inseparably attached to that Profession.

The *Coptes* fast very austere, and in the same manner as we do, and eat but once in the Day, viz. at Sun-set. There are Images in their Churches, but they pay them no Worship, and only

* This Word signifies, *God pardon thee.*

look upon them as Monuments of Things past. I must own to thee, that I don't condemn Images, so long as no other Use is made of 'em*. God, in his Law, has only forbid us to pay them that Worship which tends to Idolatry†; so far was he from excluding them out of private Houses, that he permitted them to be plac'd in the Temple, and even in the Sanctuary; for two Cherubims were plac'd there upon the Ark§.

Images are speaking Characters, which represent to our Eyes the Events of past Ages, or those of our own. I don't think that the Use of godly Books

* I desire the Readers seriously to consider, if the Enemies of *Aaron Monceca* have done Justice to that *Jeſu*, in charging him with being an *Iconolaſtes*, and a furious Adversary of Images.

† The Fathers of the Church, who have maintained the Worship of Images, plead the Figures that were plac'd in the Temple for their Authority. Nevertheless, one Difficulty still remains, which their Adversaries object to them, *viz.* That never was any Worship paid to those Figures.

§ *John Damascenus*, in his *Defence of Images*, has not forgot this Particular: *Quid autem dicis, Arcam illam, Urnam, Propitiarium, non manibus esse affabrè confecta? Non esse opera manuum hominum? Non uti censes, ex ignominiosâ et aspernabili materia exsculpta sunt? Quid autem Tabernaculum illud omne? Nonne imago erat? Nonne umbra et exemplar?* i. e. Say'st thou that the Ark, the Urn, the Mercy-seat, are not the curious Workmanship of the Hand of Man? Dost thou think that they are not cary'd out of ignominious and contemptible Matter? And what was that whole Tabernacle? Was it not an Image? Was it not a Shadow and a Copy? *John Damascenus, Apologetic. pro Venerat sanctar. Imaginum, lib. iii. p. 78.* The same Father had just said a little before, *Jubet autem (Deus) ut exsculpant similitudinem Cherubim; and God commands that they carve the Figure of a Cherubim.*

will

will ever be condemn'd, or that they will be banish'd out of Churches: So long as a Picture is consider'd as a Book, and only serves to edify the Mind, by recalling the Actions of illustrious and pious Men to it's Remembrance, the Use of them can't but be good. There are a great many *Nazarenes* who can't read, and wou'd be ignorant of many pious Passages, that tend to edify them, were it not for Pictures and Images, which are the Books of the Ignorant. I cannot, therefore, approve of the furious Zeal of many People, who, out of Devotion, have demolish'd and broke in Pieces those Monuments of Sculpture and Painting, which are worthy of the Admiration of all good Judges. In my Travels to *Hungary*, and some Northern Countries, I have seen the sad Effects of this Hatred of Images. 'Tis true, that this Fury, which had a Tendency to renew the Barbarity of the *Goths*, is intirely at an End. The *Nazarenes*, who, at this Day, exclude Images from their Temples, only condemn the Worship that is paid to them, and only separate them from the Ceremonies of their Religion, for fear that the Vulgar, who are so inclinable to Superstition, shou'd become idolatrous without thinking it.

'Tis very certain, that there are some *Nazarene* Papists who don't worship Images; and think that they are commanded by their Religion, to consider them only as Things that ought to excite them to Piety, by the Ideas which they present to their Imagination. But, 'tis altogether as certain, that they are only People of the best Education that keep within those just Bounds; for the Vulgar are excessively prone to Idolatry, especially they who are so stupid that they can't distinguish meer Veneration from Worship. There are some Boers, who wou'd suffer themselves to be cut in Pieces for the sake of a Wooden Image, representing the Patron

Saint of his Village. He has very long Conversation with him, prays to him for a good Harvest, for which he promises him several Offerings, and is really persuaded, that there is in this Timber a supernatural Virtue.

The Craft of the Monks, who publish Miracles every now and then, leads the People farther into Error. They declare that one Image spoke, that another mov'd its Eye-balls, or sweated Blood. Is not all this with a Design to make the Vulgar believe, that in those Statues there is something divine and supernatural? Is it not to lead and draw them into Idolatry? And what Peasant is there, who when he is persuaded that such an Image has spoke several Times, will not imagine, that since it has the Use of Speech, it has (no doubt) also the Faculty of Hearing? The Image is, after this, no longer a mere Character, to revive the Memory of a godly Person, but it becomes a Demi-god, to whom he addresses the same Prayers as a Pagan made to a *Mercury*, or a *Juno*. Thus the Avarice of the Monks, who endeavour to bring Custom to certain Images by the Ruin of those of their Neighbours, and to draw in all the Gains to their own Temple, perverts a Custom, which is of itself pious, and useful to the Edification of Mankind, into a Crime.

What I say to thee will, no doubt, be unpalatable to some of our Brethren, who would be offended, and think their Synagogues profan'd, if they saw any Images and Pictures there. But if thou dost but reflect, that when we came out of *Egypt*, we left an idolatrous People; that we might have had an Inclination to fall into their Errors; that we were not yet confirm'd against Idolatry, as plainly appears from the Golden Calf which our Fathers set up in the Wilderness; thou wilt no longer wonder at the
wife

wise Precautions which *Moses* took to put every thing out of our Way, that might lead us to commit Faults. How happy were it for all People, if they had so wise a Guide!

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy.



L E T T E R LXXXII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to
ISAAC ONIS, a *Caraite*, formerly a
Rabbi, at Constantinople.

Dear ISAAC,

I Received thy Letter upon the Manners and Customs of the *Coptes* that are descended from the antient *Egyptians*. Their being so contemptible puts me in Mind of the vile State of the *Greeks*, *Romans* and *Carthaginians*. I can't conceive how 'twas possible for those four Nations that were so famous heretofore, to become the basest and the most despicable People in the World.

The *Egyptians* were the first that knew and cultivated the Arts and Sciences; we don't know such antient Edifices any-where as the famous *Pyramids*, which are Proofs of the Grandeur of those by whose Order they were erected, and of their Skill in Architecture by whom they were built. But the Names of those by whom those superb Monuments were rais'd, were as great a Secret 2000 Years ago as they are now. By this thou may'st judge of their Antiquity. The *Egyptians* pretend they are far

more antient than the Deluge ; but since the sacred Scriptures determine our Belief, 'tis probable that the Pyramids were erected a few Years after it.

There's one Argument however that seems to oppose this Opinion : Was *Egypt*, at that Time, so full of People that they cou'd spare Hands to undertake such vast Buildings as requir'd so many Labourers, and so much Labour ? The Countries about the *Tygris* and the *Euphrates*, were the first that were inhabited by the Descendants of *Noah's* Children ; but *Egypt* not till afterwards.

Some Persons imagine that those Pyramids were built before the Deluge ; but this is an Opinion liable to many Objections, and seems to have no Colour for it, but their unknown Antiquity.

The Sciences were cultivated by the *Egyptians*, in the earliest Times ; and, as soon as they began to be known, they discover'd all the Marks that denote the Antiquity of a Nation ; and they had a settled Worship and Religion, with Laws and Customs, the Use of which did not seem to be modern.

The Priests of this Nation were the first Philosophers. 'Tis said they own'd *one Supreme God, one only perfect Being* ; but 'tis my Opinion, they never had a true Idea of the Divine Being ; and that from the Moment that Men were once plung'd into Idolatry, they had no longer any just Notion of God, in what Country soever they dwelt. When I speak of Men, I mean even the most learned, among whom I include the *Egyptian, Greek, and Roman* Philosophers. The first of these allow'd of two chief eternal Deities, the Sun and Moon, that govern'd the whole World. They believ'd that the whole System of Nature was form'd of the Bodies of those two Planets ; and that Spirit, Fire, Dry
and

and Moïst, were Portions or Members of that System *. This bears a great Resemblance to the Modification of *Spinoza*, and the System of that Apostate *Jew* was that of almost all the antient Philosophers, who perplex'd it by mixing several other Falshoods with it. When we clear up this Chaos of false and vague Ideas, it will appear, that the Pagans, who said, or believ'd, that there was but one Deity, acknowledg'd him in the same manner as they acknowledg'd there was but one World ; and, by consequence, the God in whom they believ'd was a God compos'd of 100000 different Gods, since every thing that is material has Parts necessarily, and by consequence is divisible. Every Part, therefore, of which the Divinity was compos'd, must be of itself a God ; for how absurd wou'd be the Consequence of a Position, that a Being divine is compos'd of Parts that are not divine ! It wou'd be the same thing as to offer to prove, that a thinking Matter, if such a thing cou'd be, was compos'd of unthinking Parts.

It can't be said, that any of the antient Philosophers ever had a Notion of the Spirituality of God †. None of them could ever rise to such a sublime Speculation. *Plato* is the only one, who, by his Conversation with the *Jews*, was furnish'd with any Notion of the Immortality of the Divine Being. Nor can it indeed be said, that he had a right Notion of it ; and so far was what he said of it from being receiv'd by the other Phi-

* Ideoque totum Naturæ universæ Corpus Sole et Lunâ consummari ; cujus partes jam indicatæ, Spiritus, Ignis, Siccitas, Humor, et aëria tandem Natura ; e quibus, ut in Homine Caput, Manus, Pedes, et alias Partes numeramus, eodem modo Corpus Mundi constat. *Diodor. Siculus, lib. i. cap. 2.*

† See the secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters, Letter V. where this Matter is very fully treated.

losophers, that they rejected it, as what was unintelligible, and contrary to Reason, and the Light of Nature. *Cicero*, when he examines the several Opinions of the Philosophers concerning the Nature of God, does not think it worth his while to stand to examine the Sentiments of *Plato*, *Who*, says he, *holds a God to be without a Body, and his Argument cannot be understood* *. But *Plato* himself only own'd a Deity after a corporeal Manner, and the Spirituality which he ascribes to it is but a Sort of Substance compos'd of a subtle delicate Matter, which he believes to have been the Principle of all Things created. In what other Sense can this *external World that was given out*, be explain'd, which according to the Philosopher, is nothing more than the Substance which God exerted from his own Bosom, or which he *ingender'd* to form the Universe? Is not that a material Deity, which exerts Seed from its own Bosom? If the World be a Part of the Substance of God, as *Plato* pretends, admitting of the Supreme God in the first Place, and afterwards of a God, the visible Minister of the invisible God Creator of the World, which is the third God: Are there not as many Gods as there are Parts in Matter? And is not his System a rough Draught of that of *Spinoza*?

'Tis my Opinion, dear *Isaac*, that, from the Moment that Men fell into Idolatry, God intirely withdrew his Spirit from them, and their Posterity; that they had no longer a true Notion of the Divine Being; and all the Ideas they conceiv'd of it, were deriv'd from what they still remember'd their Ancestors had transmitted to them, of a Deity which they had forsaken.

* Quod *Plato* sine Corpore Deum esse censet; id quale esse possit, intelligi non potest. *Cicero de Natura Deorum, lib. i.*

I know

I know that this Principle leads to the Opinion, that we have no innate Idea of God : But I believe, that a careful Attention to this Question is enough to convince any Man, that the Soul has no innate Idea of the Divine Being in itself, and acquires no Knowledge of it, but by the Reflection which it makes, when 'tis in a Capacity of reasoning upon the great Miracles, which 'tis sensible could not have been operated but by a supreme and perfect Being. If the Soul had an innate Idea of the Divine Being, it could not be a mistaken one ; and the Characters impress'd by the Hand of the Almighty cou'd not be effac'd. But the Pagans appear to be so far from having had a just Idea of the true Deity, that we are surpriz'd at the Errors into which they have fallen. There's still a Multitude of People that pay Adoration to Things the most contemptible. The common Answer to these Arguments, which I look upon as Demonstration, is, that God engraves his Idea in the Hearts of Mankind in general ; but that Men, by wrong Applications, afterwards corrupt it. Really, dear *Isaac*, this is a pitiful Argument ; for what can be thought of more impertinent than those abstracted Ideas ? Besides, abstracted Ideas suppose a Foreknowledge of Objects that resemble one another, and have some Relation together : But Abstraction cannot agree with a first Idea, which ought to be pure and simple ; nor by Consequence with the Idea of the Divine Being.

'Tis absurd to say, that God communicates an Idea to us directly contrary to the Being which he is willing to make known to us ; and if the extravagant Notions which the Pagans had of the Deity, had been impress'd on them immediately by the Deity itself, it might as well be asserted, that the Soul brings with it, into the World, the most extravagant Notions ; and that they are innate with it.

'Tis

'Tis easy to prove, dear *Isaac*, that the Idea of the Deity not being innate with the Soul, there is no Idea of him that is so. If the Supreme Being had chose to imprint any Notions of him immediately, he would, no doubt, have chose to give Mankind a clear and distinct Notion of the Divinity, rather than impress them with Notions of general Principles of Morality.

If it be true, that we have any of those Principles connate with us, why do Men think so differently of Things that constitute Good and Evil? Whence comes it, that what is blameable in one Country is look'd upon as virtuous in another? The *Topinambous* think, that by taking a cruel Revenge on their Enemies, they open their Way to Heaven; and he that eats up the greatest Number of 'em is reckon'd the Man of the greatest Piety and Bravery*. The *Turks*, and especially the *Egyptians*, look upon those Persons as Saints, whom the *Nazarenes* wou'd think it but just to burn at the Stake†. They confer the highest Honours upon Monsters that human Nature blushes at, such as have nothing but the human Shape, and are guilty of Errors a hundred times more to be blam'd than those People who drew down Fire

* John de Lery, cap. xvi.

† *Audi vimus hæc dicta & dicenda per interpretem Mucrelo nostro, insuper sanctum illum, quem eo loci vidimus, publicitus apprimè commendari eum esse sanctum, divinum, ac integritate præcipuum, eò quòd nec Fæminarum unquam esset, nec Puerorum, sed tantummodo Asellarum concubitor atque Mularum: i. e. We have heard it said, that it was to be told, moreover, by an Interpreter to our Mucrelus that the Saint whom we saw there, is, by public Authority, to be commended as a holy divine Person, eminent for Integrity; forasmuch as he never had Copulation with Women or Boys, but only with She-Asses and Mules.* Baumgarten, lib. ii. cap. i. p. 73.

from

from Heaven to destroy them. The Pagans thought they serv'd their Gods by sacrificing a Number of *Nazarenes* to them. The *Portuguese* think they do Honour to Heaven by causing our Brethren to be burnt. The *Molinists* make an Offering to God of the Torments which they inflict on the *Jansenists*. The *Druses* of Mount *Lebanon* marry their own Daughters, and on a certain Day of the Year they use one another's Wives promiscuously †. What becomes then, dear *Isaac*, of the innate Principles of Morality? Where is that universal Consent, which they who maintain those Ideas require to be granted to them by all Nations? That's their strongest Argument. But Experience being against them, all their philosophical Reasoning must fall to the Ground; and 'tis disputing to no Purpose, to deny a thing, that every one, who will be at the Trouble of Inquiry, cannot but discern.

Some Persons think the Opinion of innate Ideas useful and necessary to prove the Existence of God. They can't bear to part with an Argument which they think decisive against the Atheists. When once, *say they*, 'tis made appear, that Ideas are con-nate with the Soul, Libertines are forc'd to own the Existence of the Divine Being, because the Soul bringing the Idea of a God with it into the World, it must necessarily be that God himself who im-printed it. But they who talk after this manner don't see that they beg the Question: For the *Spinosists* deny these Ideas, and the Time which is lost, in going to prove the Truth to them, is Time spent in mere cavilling, which clears up no Point; whereas, by having recourse at first to substantial Arguments, 'tis easy to convince People, who are so blind as to deny a thing, of which it is

† See *Bespier*, Remarks upon *Ricaut*, tom. ii. p. 649.

as easy to give them Proofs as of their own Existence.

I don't believe there is an Atheist so weak as to presume to say, that he always had a Being. Therefore something must necessarily have been before him; and, to go still further back, something must have been from all Eternity; for it would be the Height of Folly, to pretend to assert, that nothing can produce a real Being. Now, this Being, which has existed from all Time, must necessarily be omnipotent, because it is the Source and Principle of all other Beings; and because from it they derive their Power and Faculties. By necessary Consequence this first Being must also be an intelligent Being; for Man is sensible that he is himself an intelligent Being. Now, from whence cou'd he that was created by an eternal Being, derive that Intelligence; if he had not from that same eternal Being receiv'd it? By Consequence, therefore, this eternal Being must be not only omnipotent, but also intelligent.

What Need is there of innate Ideas to prove the Being of a God, and to prove it beyond Contradiction? What is an eternal Being, sovereignly powerful and intelligent, if it be not God?

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; live content and ,
and be crown'd with Prosperity.





L E T T E R LXXXIII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi
at Constantinople.*

I Was Yesterday at a Theatrical Representation, which I had never seen before. The Chevalier *de Maisin* carried me to the Ball of the Opera, which is an Assembly that is capable of furnishing a Philosopher with Matter enough for thirty Years Reflection. I shall endeavour to give thee the justest Idea of it that I can. Thou knowest in what Form the Rooms are built for Plays; for thou hast seen such at *Vienna* as are like those at *Paris*. The Pit and Stage are join'd together, which forms a Floor where there's Dancing; and the Boxes round are full of Persons in Masks, who often come to the Ball neither to dance, nor to see Dancing, but for something of more Importance. Love is the Sovereign of the Place, and presides over the most amiable Maskers. Here, under various Disguises, the Lover and the Mistress laugh at the vain Watchings of the jealous Husband, whose Precautions, after he has teaz'd himself for a whole Year, are all defeated by one Ball of an Opera. In the Crowd of Maskers, the Duchess is confounded with the Citizen's Wife, and the 'Prentice-Boy with the Grand Signior; for in Assemblies of this sort, Love, Joy and Pleasures put all the Company on a Level.

The *Parisians* have a profound Respect for every Face that is mask'd; but the Mistakes which have sometimes happen'd, render them very cautious; for if they were less circumspect, they would often fail in the Regard due to Persons of Distinction, by
treating

treating and talking familiarly with such whom they think all the while to be but private People.

The Reservedness which the Masquerade Habit demands, often gives Occasion to the most pleasant Adventures in Life, in a Country where Gallantry and Love are the Business of three Parts in four of the Inhabitants. A young Woman, whose morose Husband was so cross-grain'd that he deserv'd the Fate of the unfortunate *Vulkan*, only waited for the Conveniency of a Ball to favour her beloved Gallant; for her Motions were so continually watch'd and restrain'd by her jealous Husband, that she was forc'd to have recourse to extraordinary Methods to avoid his Pursuit, and to baffle his Vigilance. She wrote to her Lover, that she would be at the Ball mask'd in a Green *Domino*, and that she would place herself in the third Box on the Right-side of the Stage. The Spark was, to the last Degree, impatient for the Hour of the Assignment. As soon as the Clock struck eleven, away he flew to the Opera; and as soon as he enter'd the Place, he cast his Eyes on the third Box, and there perceiv'd a Masker in a Green *Domino*, who he did not doubt was his dear Mistress. He made his Addresses to her very briskly, and said every thing to her that the most tender Love inspires. The Masker return'd no Answer, but was perfectly mute. The Spark, astonish'd at this Coldness, reproach'd her for treating him with such an undeserved Indifference: *What!* says he, *Madam, is this the happy Minute that I so much wish'd for? Did you send me Word, that you would come to the Ball, only to have the Pleasure of wounding me to the Heart? For God's sake, Madam, what have I done to displease you? What! not a Word! Alas! this Silence drives me to Despair. In Return for so much Love——*The Nazarene Spark wou'd have proceeded farther with his Complaint, but he was interrupted

interrupted by a loud Laugh from the Masquer that he spoke to, which very much surprized him; but his Astonishment was much greater, when, by the Laugher's unmasking herself, he perceiv'd that the Person whom he took for his Mistress was his own Wife. However, his Trouble was soon over; for conjugal Infidelity is no extraordinary Case in *France*, where a fickle Husband is far from being a Phoenix. He himself laugh'd also at his Mistake, and then went round the Ball-Room in quest of the Person whom he had not yet found. His Wife, happening to be at the Opera before his Mistress, had taken the very Place the latter intended for herself, who was then forced to go to another; and the Resemblance of their Masquerade Habits had drawn this Lover into his Mistake.

I had this Story from the Chevalier *de Maisin*, who told me another, which is, in my Opinion, more entertaining than that: A Farmer-General of the Revenue, who had carried his Mistress to the Ball, did not suspect any Rival, but was mistaken; for a Captain of Dragoons was the Man she was fondest of; and the Farmer was no otherwise happy in her Charms, than as he paid dearly for the Favours she granted him. The Fair-one stole out of the Crowd of Maskers, and went to pass a Quarter of an Hour with the Officer in a Hackney-Coach. These hir'd Vehicles are happy Places for the Retirement and Screen of Lovers, while the Ball holds. The Farmer-General, burning with some Desire of Concupiscence, thought the surest Method to drive away the Temptation was to yield to it. Therefore he went to the Ball in quest of his dear Mistress, and, in a certain Group of the Maskers, he thought he saw her. He squeez'd her by the Hand, and made a Motion to her to withdraw. She consented accordingly, and went with him, but said not one Word.

Word. The Farmer-General was no sooner got to the Steps of the Ball-Room, but he perceiv'd the Captain of the Dragoons returning with his Mistress, who had not yet put on her Mask again. Thou may'st guess, dear *Isaac*, how much he was surpriz'd. He curs'd the Ball, the Opera, the Captain of the Dragoons, his Mistress and himself, a thousand times. He broke off for ever from the perfidious Dame; and being curious to know who the Lady was that so freely follow'd him, he found that she was one of those common Strollers, who are always the humble Servants of every Man that asks them.

Every Ball is productive of some particular Story; for the Entertainments of this kind are signaliz'd by a Number of Adventures, owing to Love and Jealousy. These Days, or rather Nights of Pleasure are fatal to Husbands and Parents too, let 'em take ever so much Care of their Wives and Daughters; for the Liberties indulg'd at the Ball, and the Conveniences of the Mask, deceive the most watchful *Argus's*.

The Assemblies of this kind are very much like the antient Pagan Ceremonies of the Temples of *Cytherea* and *Paphos*; and sure I am that the Goddess *Venus* therein receives at least as many Vows and Offerings.

Would'st thou believe, dear *Isaac*, that in a Country where Love and Gallantry bear such a Sway, the Favours of the Fair-Sex are generally carried by Money? But so it is, that few of them are Proof against Speeches that are larded with Lewid'ors; and I am certain, that there are more Hearts at *Paris* that are sold than given. This is a Truth which the Women don't care to own; but, on the contrary, they affect a prodigious Contempt for such whose Affections they suspect are govern'd rather by Interest, than a tender Passion; tho' a Woman that finds fault

fault with a Neighbour or Friend of hers, often follows the very Maxim which she condemns. They don't see their own Failings, which Self-love disguises from them; and they only judge of themselves thro' that Mist of the Passions, which intirely clouds the Mirror whereby we examine our own Hearts. Thus did *Philip* heretofore, who was King of *Macedon*, preach a Moral to his Son quite different from that which he practis'd himself. He blam'd him for being profuse of his Money to the *Macedonians*, and reproach'd him for placing a Dependance upon such Hearts as were not given, but sold *.

* *Præclarè in epistolâ quadam Alexandrum filium Philippus accusat, quòd largitione benevolentiam Macedonum consecetur: ' Quæ te malum, inquit, ratio in istam spem induxit, ut eos tibi fideles putares fore, quos pecuniâ corrupisses? An tu id agis, ut Macedones non te regem suum, sed ministrum & præbitorem sperent fore? Benè ministrum & Præbitorem, quia sordidum regi: Melius etiam, quòd largitionem, corruptelam esse dixit. Fit enim deterior, qui accipit, atque ad idem semper expectandum paratior.' Hoc ille de Filio; sed præceptum putamus omnibus. Cicero de Officiis, lib. ii.*

i. e. 'Twas a notable Reprimand which *Philip* gave to his Son *Alexander* in a certain Epistle, wherein he accus'd him for thinking to get the Good-will of the *Macedonians* by his Bounty: 'What a Plague, said he, could induce thee to think, that they would be faithful to thee, whom thou hadst brib'd with Money? Dost thou do this, that the *Macedonians* may hope thou wilt be their Minister and Purveyor, instead of their King?' He said well, their Minister and Purveyor, because 'twas a sordid Part for a King; and the rather, because he had call'd his Bounty Corruption; for he is the worse who takes a Bribe, and is therefore always the more ready to expect it. This *Philip* said to his Son; but we think it a Lesson for every body.

There's

There's a strong Attachment in all Men to study Excuses for their Follies ; and the Philosophers themselves are not exempt from this Failing, which serves to keep the Vices in Countenance. The Women, whose Vanity is even stronger than the Mens, are also more fruitful in Apologies to colour those Parts of their Conduct which are least conformable to Virtue. When they are to excuse their being false to their Husbands, they say, that they are captivated by some deluding Biass, which it is not in their Power to resist. They were match'd from their Infancy with a Man whom they did not love : Why shou'd they be condemn'd to pass their best Days in Sadness and Melancholy ? And if the Laws make a Desire, which they derive from Nature, a Crime, why did the Men make such whimsical Laws ?

Thus do the fair Infidels find Reasons to justify their Conduct. The Coquette has also her Excuses ready : ' Is it any harm, *says she*, to be obliging ? ' As long as I commit no Crime, what is my Husband the worse for the fine Speeches that are made to me, or the Honours that are paid me ? ' Because I am married, and can't hear those Praises at home which I deserve, must I be forc'd to shun the Company of the Complaisant ? Must I live retir'd, like a She-Bear in a Den, to please my Husband, and to quiet his foolish Jealousy ? If he is so silly as to indulge himself in a thousand chimerical Notions, so much the worse for him ; for my part, I'll not bury myself alive to bring him to Reason.'

In this manner does the Coquette justify and authorise her Conduct ; and why should she not, since she, who even sells her Favours, has also the Secret of justifying herself ? She that is young, handsome, and lovely, why should not she make an Advantage of the Graces which Heaven has granted to her ?

Time

Time flies away, and so does Beauty, and old Age comes on ; whereas no Care has been taken to amass an Estate wherewith to end her Days in Peace. When the Season of Love is once past, it never returns. A young Woman who is pretty, and has but a small Fortune, ought always to have in her Mind the Fable of the Grasshopper and Pismire. If, before her Beauty is faded, she has not taken care to fill her Coffers, it will be in vain for her to beg Relief.

*Que faisiés-vous autrefois ?
Dit-on à cette Emprunteuse.
Je chantois, ne vous déplaise,
Nuit & Jour à tout Venant.
Vous chantiés ? J'en suis bien aise.
Eh bien, gueusez maintenant *.*

i. e. What did you do for a Living heretofore ?
*said the Ant to the Grasshopper, who came to borrow
some Provision out of her Store.* I sang Day and
Night, an't please you, to every Passenger. You
sang, did you ? I am very glad to hear it. Well
then, now go and beg.

There is nothing, dear *Isaac*, but a Woman can gild over with specious Pretexts ; and the more Wit she has, the more Excuses she has at hand for her Faults. God keep us therefore from this faithless Sex ; let us fly their deceitful Charms, and look upon them as one of those Draughts, which, though delicious to the Taste, conceal the most deadly Poison. Not but I think it possible for a Philosopher to be sensible of the Passion of Love, and that there are some Women deserving of the Esteem of those that are the most rigid. But there's great Danger of being deceiv'd in the Choice. The Heart of Man is commonly determin'd by its own Inclination ; and, without staying to be advised by Rea-

* Parodies of *Fontaine's* first Fable.

son,

son, blindly follows the Bias which draws it. Love is kindled by a Glance of the Eye, instead of being the Fruit of Reflection, and is fed by a certain Sympathy, but seldom by an Acquaintance with the Perfections of the Object belov'd; and 'tis extinguish'd, often without knowing why, the very Moment when it was least expected.

It has been frequently disputed, whether a Man of Learning, and one that applies to the Sciences, ought to marry; and several Arguments have been urg'd *pro* and *con*. But, for my Part, I think 'tis far better for all that are inclin'd to Study, to enjoy intire Liberty, than to be in a sort of Slavery, which, be it ever so gentle, is nevertheless sometimes disagreeable. To be a Woman, and not have Whimsies, is a thing impossible. She that has fewest, is the wisest. A Philosopher is diverted in his Reflections by the Uneasiness and Cares of Housekeeping. Be he ever so poor, if he is single, he can easily maintain himself; but when he is married, the Case is otherwise. If he is rich, he is still the more embarrass'd; the Advancement of his Family, the Settlement of his Children, the Whimsies and Ambition of his Wife; all things of this kind teaze and torment him, be he ever so much Master of himself and his Passions. I am sure that *Socrates*, notwithstanding his Philosophical Phlegm, would have been glad more than once, that all the Devils in Hell had his Wife. If he did not say it, believe me, dear *Isaac*, he certainly thought so. Were it but the Fashion in *France* for a Man to sell his Wife when he is weary of her, I know a great many Men of Learning, who wou'd part with theirs very cheap; and if this Privilege was only granted to Students, the greatest Drones among the *French* would soon cultivate the Sciences, in order to acquire so noble a Prerogative.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy.

LET-



L E T T E R LXXXIV.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to*
ISAAC ONIS, *in* Egypt.

Dear ISAAC,

W HEN I see, in the several Countries thro' which I travel, a Number of happy People, yet ignorant, and almost reduc'd to the Instinct of Beasts, I consider the Care and Pains, which Men of Letters take, to put themselves in a way of transmitting their Name to Posterity. What Hardships, what Mortifications, do not most of 'em suffer! There must be something very cogent in the Desire of penetrating thro' the dark Night of Ages, for a Man to be so ready to sacrifice the most precious Season of Life to that View, and the only Time too in which Life can be truly enjoy'd.

From the few Years to which Nature has limited the Course of Man's Life, we should abstract the first fifteen, as being spent either in Infancy, or in the painful Tasks of Education: When Man comes to the 13th Lustre, he does nothing but waste every Day. The Mind, as well as the Body, grows languid, and both are equally a Prey to all Infirmities. Therefore reckoning from the Age of 16 to that of 60, the State of Man is properly no more than 45 Years; and this Term so short, so valuable, is employ'd by Men of Learning, in painful and often disagreeable Occupations, which afford

them no other Comfort than the Hopes of having their Memory transmitt'd to Posterity.

I own, dear *Isaac*, that the Sciences, when we have once stripp'd them of the Difficulties that attend them, have something in them that is satisfactory; and that a Geometrician, and a natural Philosopher, after having taken infinite Pains for a Course of 20 Years, think themselves well rewarded by the Discovery of some Truths, 'till then unknown. But if they would dive into their own Hearts, they would perceive, that the Hopes of immortalizing their Names, are a much stronger Incentive to them to be assiduous in the Search of those new Truths, than the mere Pleasure of extricating them from the Chaos in which they were bury'd. If they were well assur'd that nobody but themselves could discover them, and that they should never be allow'd to divulge them, I very much question whether they wou'd be willing to purchase the Knowledge of them, by the continued Toil and Labour of so many Years together.

Philosophers, and Men of Learning, are incessantly talking of the Contempt of Glory, of Wisdom, and of the Tranquility of the Soul. Notwithstanding all their fine and magnificent Harangues, 'tis certain, that were it not for Glory and Vanity, Ignorance would extend its Empire over all Mankind. 'Twas to the Desire of being distinguish'd from the Vulgar, of excelling their Fellow-Creatures, and of inspiring them with Admiration, that Antiquity ow'd the *Aristotle's*, the *Plato's*, the *Sophocles's*, the *Euripides's*, and the *Demosthenes's*. And to the same Desire do the Moderns owe the illustrious Men that have perform'd such fine and such noble Works in these latter Days.

If all the learned Men, of the several kinds, had nothing in View but to study the moral Virtues, and

to perfect themselves in Wisdom, they would have
 confin'd their Application to the Knowledge of
 themselves. They would not have study'd to
 measure the Heavens, to follow the Planets in their
 Course, to examine the various Productions of
 Nature, to anatomize them, and to extend their
 Searches to such a Nicety, as to discover the
 Weight of the Air. ' All this, *they wou'd have said,*
 ' does not answer our Designs. What is the End
 ' we have in View? 'Tis to find the Means of
 ' being happy ourselves, and of promoting the Hap-
 ' piness of other Men. Let us, therefore, study
 ' whatever may serve to render us virtuous, and let
 ' us communicate our wisest Reflections to our
 ' Companions and Countrymen. What Profit will
 ' it be to them to know that there is no Vacuum,
 ' and that the Earth moves round the Sun? It
 ' won't render them better natur'd, nor more affable,
 ' nor more virtuous, nor more serene, nor even
 ' more happy. The Ignorant, who know nothing
 ' but what they have learnt from Nature, assisted
 ' by some weak and general Instructions, are often
 ' more happy than Men of Learning. How many
 ' Tradesmen are there, who, following their Occu-
 ' pations quietly at home, live without Ambition,
 ' with all their Family about them, with much
 ' more Comfort and Satisfaction than the greatest
 ' Philosophers in the midst of their Studies, with
 ' Piles of Books about them, which treat of the
 ' Contempt of Glory! 'Tis not Learning, there-
 ' fore, that renders People happy, but Probity.
 ' Natural Philosophy, Metaphysics, and Rhetoric,
 ' all of them together, are not productive of true
 ' Wisdom, because 'tis sometimes found with a
 ' Shoemaker and a Ploughman. We must seek it
 ' where it is to be found, and prefer the quiet and
 ' peaceable Ignorance of a poor Mechanic to the

‘ unprofitable Learning of a Philosopher, and a
 ‘ Rhetorician.’

‘Tis certain dear *Isaac*, that if they, who have been at so much Pains to communicate the Knowledge they have acquir’d to Mankind, had acted only from a Love to Wisdom, they could not have help’d making those Reflections; and, by consequence, they would have thought it a hundred times more useful, to teach them the Art of living happy and quiet, than to ramble in quest of some Truths, the Knowledge of which, tho’ not to be acquir’d without infinite Toil, is, after all, of no Benefit. They would have said to them in plain Terms, ‘ Lay
 ‘ hold of the present Juncture; be virtuous, mind
 ‘ your Business, and don’t idly squander away those
 ‘ Moments which you can never recover. Time
 ‘ flies away, and, as long as your Conscience is not
 ‘ troubled with Remorse for Crimes, as long as you
 ‘ follow the Laws of Probity, you have every thing
 ‘ that is necessary to enjoy it. An Application to
 ‘ unprofitable Learning will only serve to rob you
 ‘ of a present Good, in Hopes of a future imaginary
 ‘ Happiness. Wise Men want nothing, and Philo-
 ‘ sophers have need of every thing. If you only
 ‘ aim to enjoy those Favours peaceably, which
 ‘ Heaven has granted you, your Happiness is in
 ‘ your own Power: You have nothing to do but
 ‘ to enjoy it. But the Destiny of Mankind would
 ‘ be very miserable, if their Happiness depended on
 ‘ the Knowledge of Things that are quite foreign
 ‘ to them.’

But this, dear *Isaac*, is not the usual Method, which the Learned take to instruct Mankind. They are far from talking in such a Style: If they did, they wou’d be like the Pontiffs of *Rome*, that should blame People for believing in Indulgencies; and one might consider them in the same Light, as People that
 run

run down their own Merchandise. Far from acting thus, every Man of Letters is for extolling his own particular Study to the Skies; and is even for establishing the Glory of it at the Expence of the other Sciences. A Rhetorician praises Philosophy but faintly. The greatest Effort of the human Understanding consists, according to him, in the Talent of persuading by the Force of Eloquence, and moving the Heart by the Sublimity of Diction. A Philosopher, on the other hand, looks upon a Rhetorician as a Declaimer, whose Discourses give a false Lustre, and offer nothing that is solid to those who are for Reasons, and not for Words. As a natural Philosopher, he even intirely condemns the Use and the Study of Rhetoric, as Things pernicious to the public Welfare. *They who mask and paint Women*, said a famous Sceptic Philosopher, speaking of Rhetoricians, *do less Harm, because 'tis no great Matter whether we see them in their natural Complexions or no; whereas these make it their Business to deceive, not our Sight, but our Judgement; and to adulterate and corrupt the very Essence of Things. The Republics that have maintain'd themselves in a regular and well-modell'd Government, such as those of Crete, and Lacedæmon, had Orators in no very great Esteem* §.

That Passion, so common to the Learned, of praising that Science only, to which they apply, is it not an evident Proof, that Vanity, the Desire of Glory, and Ambition, have more Share in the Pains they take, than the Love of Wisdom? If they only toil'd for the Instruction of Mankind, either they would solely apply themselves to Things absolutely useful, or when they cultivated those that are of more Curiosity than Profit, they wou'd praise all Sciences alike, and not give the Preference to that

§ *Montaigne's Essays, lib. i. cap. 15. p. 607.*

in which they think they excel. But, as they have a Notion, that the Esteem paid to it, has an Influence upon that which they hope to acquire, Self-love unites their Interests with the Interest of that: For the Philosopher thinks, that the more Philosophy is respected, his Person will be the more in Esteem. The Historian, the Poet, the Rhetorician, have the same Idea, and they contend which shall be most emphatical in the Commendation of History, Poetry and Rhetoric.

The Love of Wisdom, dear *Isaac*, is not so greedy in Pursuit of Praise. A Man who only desires to live to be useful to his Countrymen, discovers not Partiality, as to the Rank and Esteem that ought to be granted to such as give them Instructions, polish their Understanding, or form their Hearts. But Vanity, and the Desire of shining, and rising above our Countrymen, don't inspire Sentiments so disinterested; and rather incite Self-love, and create a Jealousy, which is but the more violent for being conceal'd. These Passions are the Cause that Men of Learning are commonly so unjust to one another. They are always afraid, lest the Reputation of others should diminish their own, and stop up their Passage to that Immortality to which they aspire with so much Fury. I think, dear *Isaac*, I may, with Reason, make Use of the Word *Fury*, to denote the Passion which Men of Letters have to transmit their Names to Posterity. Some have been guilty of Actions, almost as extraordinary, and, I may venture to say, almost as silly, and as criminal, as *Erestratus*. Where shall we read of a Death more extravagant than that of *Aristotle* was, if what is said of it be true? And was it not the Height of Vanity, to desire that Mankind should be inform'd he was not willing to live, because he could not comprehend a Secret of Nature? And that other
Philo-

Philosopher, who threw himself into one of the Pits of Mount *Ætna*, and left his Shoes on the Brink of the Precipice, that it might be known what kind of Death he had chose; ought he not to be consider'd as a Victim to the Fury of immortalizing his Name?

Have not the modern Writers given as strong Proofs as the antient, of their violent Fondness for the Glory of being transmitted to Posterity? *Vanini* consented to be burnt alive rather than retract his abominable System. He thought that his Followers wou'd have the less Esteem for his Works, if he did not maintain the absurd Impieties of them, even to Death. They tell a very particular Story of him, which plainly shews the Obstinacy and Vanity of a learned Man, careful how he says any thing that may diminish the Reputation and Weight of his Writings. When he was bound to the Stake, after some Reflection on the Torment he was going to suffer, he cry'd out, *Oh! God, What Torture am I condemn'd to?* A Priest who attended him to the Scaffold, to exhort him to own the Existence of the Divine Being, took hold of *Vanini's* Exclamation, and said, *There is a God then, since you call upon him. That's a Way of speaking,* reply'd the Atheist, *which is of no Consequence.* These were the last Words he spoke; for the Flames of the Pile, which was lighted that Instant, hinder'd him from uttering any more of his Blasphemies †.

Other

† This Account seems directly contradictory to what *Morery* reports, who says, that *Vanini's* Tongue was cut out; which if true, how cou'd he speak when he was ty'd to the Stake? To reconcile these different Accounts, it must be suppos'd, that *Vanini* talk'd at that rate a little before his Tongue was cut out; and that this was no sooner done but the Pile was set on Fire. *Aaron Monceca*, to

Other learned Men there have been, who, tho' not so vain as those I have mention'd, have, nevertheless, done Things directly contrary to their Repose and Tranquility, because they hop'd they shou'd extend their Names to Immortality. How many are there that have suffer'd Banishment, Imprisonment, and the Loss of all they had in the World, who might have avoided all those Misfortunes, by suppressing their Works, or by disowning them! They chose rather to lose all they had, and to groan under a harsh Captivity, or Banishment from their Country, than to have their Memories extinct.

That *Greek* Bishop, who consented to be depriv'd of his Bishopric rather than disown his being the Author of the Romance of *Theagenes* and *Charicle*, has been imitated by many in these latter Ages. *Arnaud Quesnel*, *St. Ciran*, and many other Writers, might have liv'd and dy'd in Peace, if they had not meddled with the History of the Times. If the solitary Gentlemen of *Port-Royal* had writ no more than the *Mathurins*, or if their Books had been no better than those compos'd by the *Capuchins*, they might still have enjoy'd their Retirement; but their Passion for immortalizing their Name, and the Jealousy, or Hatred, which they had conceiv'd against the Jesuits, prov'd their total Ruin.

Be the immoderate Desire of Glory ever so fatal to the Generality of Men of Learning, they ought, whom I wrote at *Constantinople*, for an Explanation of this Matter, return'd me for Answer, That he had read the Passage which he had reported, in a very good Author, whose Name he cou'd not recollect; and added, that he remember'd the original Terms of the Conversation, *Ab Deus! Ergo est Deus*, said the Priest: *Modus est loquendi*, reply'd *Vanini*. I wou'd willingly have suppress'd this Passage; but after *Aaron Monceca's* Answer, I thought fit to translate it just as it is.

dear-

dear *Isaac*, to have our Pardon for the sake of the Profit we reap from them. Since the Emulation, with which they vie with one another, excites them to produce a thousand fine Works, they are only to be pity'd for suffering Ambition, instead of Wisdom, to be the Motive of what they do; and we must own, however, that we have Obligations to the very Vice which we condemn; for it supplies the Want of Virtue, and, without it, the Sciences would languish.

If there are any Faults to be forgiven, undoubtedly they must be those which so much act the Part of Wisdom, that it requires long Speculation to perceive their Imperfection. Besides, all the Learned don't push the Desire of Glory, and the Passion for being talk'd of, to Extremity. In all the various States of Life, in all the different Professions, there are many People who carry things to the utmost Period; and the Case is generally the same with the Men of Learning. But some there are who curb their Desires, and wont suffer 'em to carry them beyond certain Bounds. If it be true, that all are greedy of Immortality, 'tis equally true, that they don't all employ the same Means to attain to it; and that they are not willing to purchase it at the same Price.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and live content and happy.



L E T T E R LXXXV.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to
JACOB BRITO, at Montpellier.

THE Nazarenes, dear Jacob, are the very first People to ridicule their Monks, and their superstitious Ceremonies. There are, every now-and-then, some sprightly bold Genius's, who breaking thro' all Restraint, hold out the Torch of Reason full in the Eyes of the People; but the Monks soon obscure this transitory Light, and none but Philosophers make use of it, to fortify their Minds against the Attacks of Superstition. I have been just reading a Book of this Character, written by a Nazarene, intitled, *The History of the admirable Don Inigo of Guipuscoa, a Knight of the Virgin, and Founder of the Monarchy of the Inighists, with a short Account of the Establishment and Government of that formidable Monarchy*, by M. HERCULES RASIEL DE SELVA †. 'Tis a lively and engaging Picture of the surprizing and extraordinary Actions of one of the chief Heroes of the Monastic State, and even of Nazarenism.

This Man, whose Name was *Inigo*, was a Spaniard; he was vain, proud and ignorant, as are most of his Nation; a most obsequious Lover, always ready to lose his Life for the Ladies, and to undertake the most extraordinary Things in the World. And

† This Book was printed at the *Hague*, in 2 Volumes 8vo, for the Widow *Levier*.

thus does the Author of that Work paint him, before his Brains were quite turn'd by a fanatical Devotion. These are the Terms in which he speaks of him : ‘ Glory and Love were his prevailing Passions. He could not imagine how a Man of Quality could live with Honour without a great Share of Ambition, or be happy without Gallantry. These two Passions engrossed him in their Turn. All the Time that the Campaign lasted, he devoted to Glory ; and so eagerly did he pursue it, that he run the Hazard of Battles to obtain it. But while the Troops were in their Summer or Winter Quarters, he reposed himself, after the Toils of *Mars*, in the Arms of *Venus*. ’

That's the Picture which the Author draws of his Knight-Errant, which is the Name that he gives him throughout his whole Work ; and he draws an exact Parallel between Don *Inigo* of *Guipuscoa*, and Don *Quixot de la Mancha*. Perhaps, dear *Jacob*, thou wilt not be displeased to know the Grounds this Writer had to make so pleasant a Comparison. He says in the first Place, that the Extravagancies of both the Knights-Errant were intirely owing to Reading. The *Amadis* depriv'd Don *Quixot de la Mancha* of his Senses, and Spiritual Romances had the same Effect upon Don *Inigo de Guipuscoa*. Having kept his Bed so long upon account of a Wound he received at a Siege, that he was quite weary of it, a Book was brought him in the *Castilian* Language, says the Writer of his pious Follies, which had the Title of the *Saints Flower*. ‘ This sacred Romance, abounding with marvellous Stories, affected him almost as much at first, and afterwards much more than the Books of Chivalry, which till then had been his sole Delight. He admired that rambling Disposition of the *Saints Errant*, which made them travel from one End of the World to the other

‘ without any Provision’. Thus, my dear *Brito*, thou hast a *Don Quixot* in Perfection, his very Terms, Phrases, Expressions, Ideas and Sentiments.

The Author too is every whit as unlucky in the Method he takes to determine his Hero to go in quest of his Adventures. In one single Passage he banters all those Zealots heated by a superstitious Devotion, whose ridiculous Actions were looked upon as Miracles, by the *Nazarene* Vulgar, and preached up as Examples of the sublimest Sanctity by a whole Croud of fanatical Monks. ‘ What’s the matter, says the Knight-Errant *Don Inigo*, that I, who am of so robust a Constitution, can’t do what so many puny Saints have done? Why can’t I content myself, as St. *Hilarian* did, with only four Figs a Day after Sun-set; or live, as St. *Apollonius* did, upon nothing but raw Herbs, as they are produced by the Earth, without Cultivation, the same which are browsed by the Beasts? Why can’t I sleep upon a Stone without leaning on it, as well as St. *Pacomius*; or sit in the hollow Trunk of a Tree, encompassed with sharp Stakes, as St. *Zuivard*; or even not lie down at all, like St. *Dorothy* the *Theban*? Why can’t I make two hundred Genuflexions a Day like St. *Guingalois*, pray three hundred times a Day like St. *Paul the Anchorite*, and like St. *Polychron*, lay my Prayers with the Root of a great Oak upon my Shoulders? What! shall I, who have with so much Constancy, suffered such cruel Torture for the sake of wearing a tight Boot of *Spanish* Leather, refuse to suffer lesser Evils for the sake of becoming a great Saint? Sure, if one St. *Daniel* had the Courage to imitate the admirable St. *Simeon the Stylite*, who stood Day and Night on the Top of a Column forty Cubits high, what should hinder me to do the same? or at least like St. *Baradat* and St. *Thalella*,

‘ to bend myself quite double in a Cage upon the
 ‘ Point of a Rock, or be suspended in the Air?
 ‘ What shall prevent me from quenching the Flames
 ‘ of Concupiscence, by throwing myself naked
 ‘ amongst a Swarm of Flies like St. *Macaire* of *Alex-*
 ‘ *andria*, or into a Heap of Briars and Thorns like
 ‘ St. *Benedict*, or into Water in the midst of Winter
 ‘ like St. *Adhelmus*, and St. *Ulfric*, or among Ice
 ‘ and Snow like the Seraphic St. *Francis*? What
 ‘ hinders, in fine, that I should not give myself a
 ‘ a thousand Lashes a Day with a Rod as St. *Anthel-*
 ‘ *mus* did, or even to imitate the Great St. *Dominic*
 ‘ *the Nasty*, who gave himself three hundred thou-
 ‘ sand Lashes a Week, while he repeated a Score of
 ‘ Psalters? Was not their Flesh of the same Nature
 ‘ as mine, or shall my Fervency and Courage be
 ‘ less than theirs?’

All these Atchievements of these pious Errants, these rambling Votaries, are the Motives by which, according to the Author, Don *Inigo* was determined to quit the World intirely, and to embrace Spiritual Knight-Errantry, Motives which are at least as ridiculous as those which determined Don *Quixot*.

Is there any thing in effect so ridiculous as to imagine, that the Deity delights to see the Discipline exercis’d upon the nasty Posteriors of the Monks, or in the Extravagancies of two or three Hermits capering like *Amadis* on a desolate Rock, or Don *Quixot* on the *Black Mountain*? What Blindness is this, dear *Jacob*! The more I reflect upon Mankind in the general, the more senseless I think them, and the more to be pitied. There is no Extravagance which they don’t accommodate to the Idea they form to themselves of the Deity; they stifle the natural Light which they have received, with a thousand Chimera’s, and by their Fooleries they render the Deity whom they worship, almost as contemptible

as the Pagans render him ridiculous by their Multiplicity of Deities.

I don't think, dear *Brîto*, that there's a greater Absurdity in believing that a Piece of Wood or Stone shares a Ray of the Divine Essence, than to fancy that half a dozen Scourges are enough to merit the Protection of the Almighty, Eternal and Supreme Being, and that Heaven has any Concern about the Buttocks of a Capuchin. But some *Nazarenes* will say, These Lashes, these Severities, mortify the Lusts of the Flesh. What! cannot the *Nazarenes* resist Temptation without being obliged to do such extravagant Things? Can't they turn aside their Mind from Evil, by no other Means but stupifying it? I pity them for being so wicked, that they cannot be good, wise and virtuous, but by becoming impertinent and ridiculous Fools. The Philosophers, and even they whose System was the most opposite to the Divine Being, had no recourse to such Extravagancies to refine their Morals. Virtue appeared amiable enough of itself in their Eyes to deserve their Care in cultivating it. *Epicurus*, the Chief of a Sect so opposite to that of the *Stoics*, forced those Philosophers however to do Justice to his Merit, and to own that his Sense of Pleasure was very grave and insipid *. The most illustrious of the *Nazarene* Doctors have themselves confessed, that they were charmed with the Wisdom and Temperance of *Epicurus* †; yet

* *Nec æstimatur Voluptas illa Epicuri, ita enim mehercule sentio, cùm sobria & sicca sit. Seneca de vitâ beatâ, cap. xiii.*

† *Epicurum accepturum fuisse Palmam in Animo meo, nisi ego credidissem post Mortem restare Animæ Vitam & Fructus Meritorum, quod Epicurus credere noluit; i. e. I should be apt to adjudge the Palm to Epicurus, if I did not believe the Life of the Soul after the Death of the Body, and the Fruit of Merit, which Epicurus would not believe. August. in Confess. lib. ii. cap. 16.*

that

that Philosopher never submitted his Back-side to be flay'd, and did not think the scratching his Flesh with Briars was a Means to become virtuous.

The Passage I just now quoted to thee appears still more ridiculous from its Resemblance to what we read in *Michael de Cervantes*, of the Motive that determined Don *Quixot* to make his first Sally. I will transcribe it for thee, that thou may'st be the better able to judge which of the two were the most extravagant Knights-Errant, the Temporal or the Spiritual.

‘ Don *Quixot* used to say, that the *Cid Ruy Dias*
 ‘ was a very brave Knight ; but that there was no
 ‘ Comparifon between him and the Knight of the
 ‘ *Flaming Sword*, who with a fingle Back-ftroke
 ‘ cut off two monftrous tall Giants in the Middle.
 ‘ *Bernard de Carpio* was in his Graces, becaufe in
 ‘ the Plain of *Roncevalles* he difpatched *Orlando*, as
 ‘ much enchanted as he was, having lifted him from
 ‘ the Ground, and choak'd him in the Air juft as
 ‘ *Hercules* squeezed to Death in his Arms that pro-
 ‘ digious Son of the Earth *Antæus*. He alfo fpoke
 ‘ handfomely of the Giant *Morgan*, who, though
 ‘ he was of that Race of Giants that was intolerably
 ‘ proud and brutifh, was however civil and affable.
 ‘ But of all Men in the World, he admired *Rinal-*
 ‘ *do of Montalban*, efpecially when he faw him fally
 ‘ out of his Caftle, and rob all he met ; and then
 ‘ again, when in *Barbary* he carried away the Idol
 ‘ of *Mahomet*, which was of mafly Gold, as the
 ‘ *History* fays *’.

Thou feef, dear *Jacob*, that the Parallel betwixt the Hero of *Guipufcoa* and the Hero of *La Mancha* is very juft, and that the Reafons which both had to embrace their Condition of Life were equally

* Don *Quixot*, Book I.

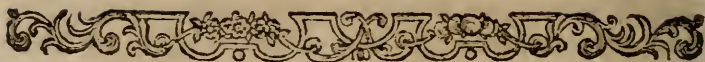
extravagant. Yet in Process of Time Don *Inigo* far outstripped Don *Quixot*, and notwithstanding all his Follies, formed a powerful and awful Society; for thou must know that Don *Inigo de Guipuscoa* is no other than the famous *Ignatius* of *Loyola*, and that the *Monarchy of the Inghists* is no other than that of the Jesuits, which is since become so formidable to all Mankind. The Author gives a very curious Account of its sudden and prodigious Establishment in all Parts of the World in three or four-score Years Time, and this too notwithstanding the strenuous Opposition of the most potent and the most celebrated Bodies. Without giving them ill Language, he there paints to the Life People whom every body pretends to talk of, without knowing them; as he does Justice to their good Qualities, so he does not spare to tell them their bad ones. Yet what he mentions of 'em is little more than what the Jesuits themselves have said of them. But by the Form and Turn that he gives to what he borrows from them, he evidently shews the Ridiculousness of the pious Follies of their Hero, which they have affected to give out for Miracles. He does not forget those especially that they wrought at his Apotheosis, which exposed them as much to Laughter as to public Indignation. He artfully lays open their secret Views, and the most hidden Springs of their Politics, and clearly discovers the Inconveniencies of their Morals. In a Word, 'tis an exact Picture of their Maxims, and their Conduct; and next to the famous *Provincial* Letters, I have read nothing so good or so well-written upon the Subject.

As this Book is privately handed about here, I should not have seen it, if it had not been for the *Chevalier de Maisin*. I know not what the Reverend Fathers will say to it when it comes more abroad; but sure I am, they will not say that it descended
from

from Heaven, as they affirmed of a certain Book publish'd by their *Inigo* at a Time when he was so ignorant, that when he was a Student at *Paris* some Years after, in the College of *St. Barbe*, he had like to have been whipped at thirty three Years old. This induced his Disciples to affirm, that God had sent this mystic Book, entitled, *Spiritual Exercises*, to *Inigo* by the Angel *Gabriel* from Heaven *. Though this is a Conceit taken from the *Turks*, and is the Canal by which *Mahomet* affirmed that the *Alcoran* was deliver'd to him, yet the Jesuits have not scrupled to make use of it; for finding it fit to serve their Turns, they thought there was no harm in making the Archangel *Gabriel* take t'other Journey to the Earth; though this celestial Messenger cannot be pleased at his being thus made a Hawker of very bad Books. This being so, I wonder that they did not make him also the Carrier of the Life of *Maria Alacoque*, and of the Truth of the Miracles of the Abbé *Paris* demonstrated, which are not inferior to any of the kind.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*; live content and happy, and let us always make merry with the Follies of our Persecutors.

* *Refert Ludovicus de Ponte, Vir omni exceptione major. in Vita P. Baltasaris Alvarez, cap. 43. Deum hac Exercitia sancto Patri nostro revelasse, imò per Gabrielem Archangelum non nemini fuisse a Deiparâ Virgine significatum, se Patronam eorum, Fundatricem, atque Adjutricem fuisse, docuisseque Ignatium, ut ea sic conciperet; i. e. Lewis de Ponte, an unexceptionable Author, relates in the Life of Father Baltasar Alvarez, cap. 43. that God revealed those Exercises to our holy Father, and that it was notified by Gabriel the Archangel to all the World on the Part of the Virgin Mother of God, that she was their Patroness, Foundress and Supporter, and had taught Ignatius to think so too. Setwel. Bibliotheca Societat. Jesu, p. 1:*



L E T T E R LXXXVI.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Montpellier *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I Promised thee, dear *Monceca*, in my last, some Account of the Physicians of this City, whose Reputation is very great. After several Conversations with some of the most able Men of the Faculty, I am still of the same Opinion which I held at *Constantinople*, though I remember thou didst not seem to approve of it.

Of all the Arts, Physic is the most uncertain. If they who apply to it, did not study Anatomy, and some other Sciences relating to the Practice of a Surgeon, I'll maintain it, that a Man might in three Days commence a Physician, and know all the great Secrets of this dangerous Art. 'Tis true, that long Experience, and frequent Visits of the Sick, convey some Ideas of certain Symptoms, by which a Physician may improve; but till he has killed a good Number of Patients, he cannot cure one; so that a Physician must only be considered as one that has just taken his Degree of Doctor; and viewing him in this Light, I believe that three Days Study will be sufficient to acquaint him with the chief Secrets of his Profession.

There are but six Remedies in Physic; and all the several Names by which they are called only denote their different Compositions, or their stronger or weaker Preparation, which still amounts however to the same Thing. This therefore, dear *Monceca*, is the whole System of Physic; *Mercury for Venereal Maladies*;

Maladies; Sulphur for external Disorders of the Skin; Ipecacuana for Dysenteries; the Emetic for Distempers that require a strong Evacuation; the Quinquina or Jesuits Bark for Fevers; Rhubarb, Sena, and Cassia, for slight Purges. Bleeding is as much the Surgeon's Province as the Physician's. To the Knowledge of these Remedies all the Doctors in the Universe reduce the whole of their Science. Indeed they sometimes invent certain Drugs, and new Compounds; but they are always obliged to return to the first Principles that are known and practised by the meanest Apothecaries in the Kingdom, who cure as many Patients as the Physicians at Montpellier do, and perhaps kill not near so many. At least, 'tis certain, that there die more People in proportion in the Cities, than in the Villages; and that there's not a City in Europe where there are fewer old Men or Women than at Montpellier.

Nevertheless, I am not willing to rob the learned Doctors of this City of any Reputation which they have justly acquired; for I look upon them as learned Physicians, and great Anatomists: This enables Men for the Cure of the Stone, Fistula's, and in short all Distempers, wherein the Hand is capable of restoring Health to the Body. As to known Subjects, the Physicians of this Country have an infinite Advantage over others. But when internal Disorders are to be cured, the Sources of which are hidden, as Fevers, Dysenteries, Pains of the Head, &c. they are no more than Country Apothecaries; *Mercury, Ipecacuana, Bleeding.* And if the Patient does not recover, *more Mercury, more Ipecacuana, and more Bleeding. Scignare, purgare, clisterisare; & si Maladia, opiniatria non vult se guarire, rescignare, repurgare, reclisterisare* *. Let the Advocates of Physic

be ever so much offended at these Jokes, the Whole of it is reducible to these Remedies which all Mankind knows. If a Physician of *Montpellier* has any small Advantage over a Country Barber, it must be in such Cases, where the Maladies which he is called to, are curable by Remedies applied immediately, and where the Hand itself can be laid upon the Part affected. Then the Knowledge of Physic and of Anatomy renders the Hopes of a Cure in a manner certain.

I can hardly forbear thinking of the Science of the Physicians as the Philosophers do of *Matter*, upon which *Matter alone is capable of acting*: So the former can't hope to cure the Parts of the Human Body, but when they can act upon them immediately; as soon as they have Recourse to foreign Helps, they are no better than the meanest Apothecaries. I talked to several learned Physicians with the same Freedom as I write to thee. They did not indeed agree in every thing that I said to them; for they maintained, that Experience made amends for the Incapacity of knowing and seeing what passed in the human Body. But they owned, that this Experience was extremely difficult to acquire, and that the first Patients that fell under the Management of a Physician were in a very dangerous Crisis. Thou knowest what they say of the Physicians. They think they are justified in trying Projects upon the unfortunate poor People, to gain Experience for the Benefit of the Rich. To be sure, dear *Monceca*, thou hast heard the Story of a Scholar that was carried sick to an Hospital, where he heard three Physicians debating in *Latin*, whether they should not try the Success of a Remedy upon him, that was enough to give him his Death. One of those Doctors actually said they ought not to be careful of such a vile Creature. 'Twas happy for the sick Man, that he understood

stood *Latin*. He made use of that Knowledge to reproach them in a pathetic Manner for their pernicious Design *, and his Learning was of Service to him; for as soon as his Physicians perceived it, they treated him with a great deal of Regard, took vast Care of him, and deliver'd him out of the sad Condition in which they found him. May the God of our Fathers dear *Monceca*, keep us out of the Hands of such People and preserve us in Health, which of all Enjoyments is the most precious!

They have a Custom in this Country, which I hold to be very proper to keep the Body in Health and Activity. The Youth are trained up to several Exercises, which promote a great Perspiration, and make the Blood circulate freely. All the Inhabitants of these Provinces in general seem to be fond of those Sports which require Strength and Agility of Body; and upon certain Days of the Year they give Prizes to those who perform best at those public Exercises, in which they imitate the Example of the antient *Greeks* and *Romans*. Two or three Days ago I was at one of those Entertainments, where I saw some young Fellows wrestling. The Victor's Prize was a silk Scarf, with a silver Fringe, which he received from the chief Echevin of the City. The Prize for Running was richer than that for Wrestling; for it consisted of a Piece of Plate curiously chased. I was charmed to see this slight Image of the antient Festivals of *Greece*, and highly approved of the prudent

* *Faciamus Experimentum in Animâ vili. Responso. Apellas Animam vilem, pro quâ Christus passus est mori?* i. e. Let us make an Experiment on this vile Creature. *Answer.* Dost thou call that a vile Creature, for whom Christ suffered Death? Thus the Story is told: But *Jacob Brito* was not so particular, because he would avoid the Mention of the Name *Jesus Christ*, which the *Jews*, who are hardened in their Blindness, don't care to repeat.

Customs

Customs of these Provinces, in encouraging their People to inure themselves to Fatigue, and to preserve and increase their Strength by Rewards of which the Distribution becomes so beneficial to the State.

If we inquire, dear *Monceca*, into the Origin of the Games and Poms of antient *Greece*, we shall soon perceive that they were as much owing to State Policy, as to the Spirit of Religion, and the Love of Shew. *They had a mind*, says a *French Writer* *, *to bring together into one Place, and to unite together by common Sacrifices, different People, who were all independent, and generally more remote from one another in point of Interest than of Space.* The Pleasures of those Feasts, to which all the People of *Greece* flocked, cemented their Affections, stifled Quarrels, and drowned Hatred and Division; and they excited a noble Emulation without stirring up Envy. These Pastimes served as a School, in which the Body was accustomed betimes to military Fatigues. Running, Wrestling, and the Use of the Cestus, did in some sort resemble military Exercises; and in a Time of Peace every *Grecian* served his Apprenticeship to War.

The *French* had Entertainments heretofore, which were almost as magnificent as the antient *Olympic Games*. Their Jufts, at which the Kings and Princes were very often present, made a noble Shew. The Nobility, who were greedy of Fame, exercised themselves betimes, in order to distinguish themselves in those famous Tournaments, wherein the Victor used to receive his Reward from the Hands of his Sovereign. But the fatal Accident, which happened to *Henry II.* who was killed at one of those Entertainments by a Lance that penetrated his Eye, caused

* The Works of *Tourel*, Tom. II. Pref. Hist. p. 17.

those Tournaments to be quite cried down, and the Use of them was soon after abolished, though it was in part owing also to the State Policy which suppressed Duels that deprived the Kingdom of its bravest Subjects. There was a Resolution formed to banish every thing that had the Appearance of a single Combat, in order to accustom the *French* the more easily to exert their Bravery for the Service of their King and Country, and for that alone.

The almost continual Wars which the *French* have been engaged in, have prevented them from perceiving how useful it is in Time of Peace to breed up the Nobility in Customs that reconcile them to Arms. They have, on the other hand, erected several useful Establishments in the room of those Tournaments. The Academies, the Companies of Musketeers, and the King's Household, are Schools to form the young Nobility, though I think there are not honorary Rewards enough to encourage them. In a State so polite as *France*, there ought to be every Year a certain Number of Prizes appropriated to military Exercises, as there are for the Sciences. I could wish that the Body of Engineers had some such Encouragement, and that some Prize were to be distributed to every Regiment; that the Officer who was most skilled in military Evolutions, or the Engineer who was most versed in the Science of Fortifications, might receive the Reward of their Merit at the Head of their Companies. Were but a Crown of Olives to be conferred upon them, and an Idea of Honour to accompany it, what would not they do to deserve it? A red or a blue Ribbon has nothing very substantial; yet what don't Men undertake to obtain it? Rewards of this sort encourage People, keep their Minds in constant Exercise, excite them to Virtue, revive the Desire of Glory in all Hearts, and cost the State nothing.

How

How happy would it be for Subjects, if the Sovereigns only rewarded those of superior Merit! How many Pensions would be suppressed, and return into their Treasury! What Opportunities would they not have to ease their Subjects, and to lessen their Taxes! How many Women, Lawyers and Courtiers, would leave off those extravagant Expences, which the Widow, the Orphan, and the Peasant, are commonly obliged to pay!

The wise and prudent Ministry of *France* has endeavoured to obviate the Abuse of Pensions. Formerly it was enough to have a Friend at the King's Ear to obtain any Request: But now it must be Merit. I often hear some *Frenchmen* cry out, and declaim against this wise Conduct of the Ministry. But they who argue rationally, and judge without Passion, commend a Prudence which tends to the Welfare of the State, and to ease the People, who are already overwhelm'd by the Calamity of the Times.

Be the Conduct ever so wise, or the Care taken in the Management of public Affairs ever so great, 'tis impossible to please every body. People are so whimsical, and so different are their Sentiments, that it would be Madness to go about to satisfy every Individual. We ought strictly to follow what Reason dictates to us, and then we have nothing more to do then to laugh at vain and ridiculous Criticisms.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*. As soon as I arrive in *Spain*, thou shalt hear from me.





L E T T E R LXXXVII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris,
to JACOB BRITO, *at* Montpelier.

I Shew'd thy last Letter to some Natural Philosophers of my Acquaintance, who declare themselves very much of thy Opinion as to the Uncertainty of that Part of the Medicinal Art which may be look'd upon as an *occult Science*, and cannot be known without making some Experiments which are often deceitful. The learned Gentlemen, whom I am speaking of, are very capable of deciding where lies the real Merit of the several Parts of Physics, and have with infinite Pains studied and examined all the most secret Labyrinths of that Science. They divide it into two Parts, the one uncertain, full of Doubts and Questions that are not to be resolv'd; the other agreeable, and always inlightened by the Torch of Truth. This last relates to Experimental Philosophy, the other to the general Principles of the Science, and to the first Operators of Nature, if we may so call those Corpuscles, which by their various assembling together constitute all the different Beings that are in the Universe.

This Part of Natural Philosophy may be reduc'd to two Points solely, which include all the others, and make it necessary to examine and discuss them, *viz.* a *Vacuum*, and Infinity. The Man that could clear up these two Questions, would render the first Part of Natural Philosophy as clear and as certain as the second. But 'tis my Opinion, that as long as there

are Men left in the World, there will be perpetual Disputes concerning the different Opinions for denying or admitting Infinity, and for maintaining or condemning a *Vacuum*; and we shall be no wiser upon this Article two thousand Years hence than we are now, and the Disputes of future Ages will give no more Light into it than those of the past. The Mind of Man, being limited, cannot rise to the Knowledge of certain Things above his Sphere. Of what Use then are those eternal Discussions which end in nothing at last? 'Tis my Opinion, dear *Brito*, that one ought to apply to the Study of certain Sciences in the same manner as to the reading of Romances, *viz.* to look into them for mere Amusement, and to consider them only as pleasant Dreams. This is the Way to shorten a great many needless Disputes which do but confine the Mind to Subjects that are commonly of no Use to it, and which it cannot rationally hope to comprehend. Of this kind are the Questions that treat of Infinity; for our finite Understanding is lost and bewildred in Infinity, which produces a Chaos of Ideas contrary to one another, betwixt which the Mind remains in such a Doubt and Confusion as hinder it from being ever able to determine itself with any Appearance of Truth.

The antient Philosophers disputed concerning Infinity, and probable Reasons were urged on both Sides. But it is a Question so full of Difficulties, that when the Mind seeks to dive to the Bottom of it, 'tis always stopped by Objections of its own raising; so that to study such Points is only to learn to doubt*. In order to be convinc'd of the Truth

* See the Book, intituled, *La Philosophie du bon Sens*; i. e. The Philosophy of good Sense, or Philosophical Reflections upon the Uncertainty of human Knowledge, &c. which was written to shew what little Solidity there is in most of the Sciences.

of my Opinion, it is sufficient to examine the various Systems of the Philosophers, which, how different soever they may appear, are reducible to two only viz. to the *Epicureans* and *Peripatetics* among the Antients, and to the *Gassendists* and *Cartesians* among the Moderns. And as to certain Questions, the Sentiments of these four Sects may again be reduc'd to two particular Opinions, one which admits a Vacuum, limits Matter, and only thinks it divisible to a certain Degree; the other, which denies any Vacuum whatsoever, admits of Infinity or Indefinity of Matter, and holds, that 'tis divisible *ad Infinitum*. In examining these Questions one runs through all that Part of Physics which I believe will eternally remain doubtful.

Let us hear an *Epicurean*, or rather a *Gassendist*, speaking of the Vacuum.

A VOID IS SPACE INTANGIBLE: Thus prov'd ;
 For, were there none, no BODY could be mov'd.
 Because, where-e'er the pressing Motion goes,
 It still must meet with Stops, still meet with Foes: }
 'Tis natural to BODIES to oppose.
 So that to move would be in vain to try ;
 But all would fixt, stubborn, and moveless lie:
 Because no yielding BODY could be found,
 Which first should move, and give the other Ground.
 But ev'ry one now sees that Things do MOVE
 With various Turns, in Earth, and Heav'n above:
 Which, were no VOID, not only we'd not seen,
 But BODIES too themselves had never been;
 Ne'er gen'rated; for MATTER, all Sides prest
 With other MATTER, would for ever rest *.

The

*——*Locus est intactus INANE vacansque:*

Quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri

Res possent; namque Officium quod Corporis exstat,

The *Gassendist* continues* :

But some object: The Floods to Fish give way,
Who cut their Passage thro' the yielding Sea;
Because they leave a SPACE, where-e'er they go,
To which the yielding Waters circling flow:
And hence by an Analogy they prove,
That tho' the WORLD were full, yet Things may move.
But this is Weak.

For how could Fish e'er ply their nat'ral Oars,
How cut the Sea and visit distant Shores,
Unless the Waves gave way? How these divide,
Except the Fish first part the yielding Tide?
Therefore fight Sense, deny what that will prove,
Discard all MOTION, and the Pow'r to shove,
Or grant a VOID, whence Things begin to move. }

These Arguments appear to be good and substantial; but when the *Peripatetic* and the *Cartesian* ask if it be possible to maintain the Existence of a Being which in reality is a mere Nothing, the Mind is im-

*Officere, atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset
Omnibus: haud igitur quidquam procedere posset
Principium, quoniam cedendi nulla daret Res.*

Lucretius *de Rerum Naturâ*, lib. 1. Of
which the Translation in the Text
is by Mr. Creech.

* *Cedere Squammigeris Latices nitentibus aiunt,
Et liquidas aperire Vias: quia post Loca Pisces
Inquat, quo possint cedentes confluere Undæ;
Sic alias quoque Res inter se posse moveri,
Et mutare Locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.
Scilicet id falsâ totum ratione receptum'st.
Nam quo Squammigeri poterunt procedere tandem,
Ni Spatium dederint Latices? Concedere porro,
Quò poterunt Undæ, cum Pisces ire nequibunt?
Aut igitur motu privandum'st, Corpora quæque;
Aut esse admistum dicendu'm'st Rebus INANE.*

Lucretius *ut supra*.

mediately

mediately hamper'd by this first Difficulty. For by endeavouring to fathom it, a Man quickly forgets the Reasons that convinc'd him of a Vacuum, and he cannot persuade himself to admit a pure Negation, a Nothing, for any thing solid, but remains under an eternal Uncertainty*.

Proceed we now, dear *Brito*, from the Question of the *Vacuum*, to that of the Infinity of Matter. There must be void Spaces beyond the World, says a *Gassendist*, and he gives two material Reasons for it. 'Suppose, says he, that you were situate at the World's End, and that you extended your Arm; either your Arm will be stopp'd, and then that which stops it must be something beyond the Verge of the World; or the Arm will have the Power of extending itself, which denotes, by Consequence, that there must be a Space beyond the utmost Part. It must therefore be confess'd, that there are Spaces void of Bodies beyond the World, or maintained that Matter is infinite, which is not only absurd, but even impious and sacrilegious; for there cannot be two Infinities. He that uses the Term *Infinite*, says a Thing which comprehends every thing; and if Matter were finite, it would be God. This Opinion is really abominable; and, as to the Pretence which the *Cartesians* have taken from *Chrysippus*, and their ambiguous Term of *Indefinity*, they are mere Child's Play, unworthy of the Candour and Sin-

* P R O P O S I T I O III.

Repugnat ut detur Vacuum.

Demonstratio.

Per Vacuum intelligitur Extensio sine Substantiâ Corporeâ, Corpus sine Corpore, quod est absurdum. Renati Cartesii Principiorum Philosophiæ, Part. I & II. More Geometrico demonstratæ per Benedictum de Spinosâ. Part II. p. 48.

‘cerity of a Philosopher. Is it not a Joke to assert that Matter is neither *Finite* nor *Infinite*, but that it is *Indefinite*? Were I to ask a *Norman* how many Crowns he had in his Pocket, and he should tell me, that they are neither even nor odd, but partly one and t’other, I should like the Answer every whit as well.’

These are the Arguments of the *Gassendists*. They strike the Imagination, and carry the Appearance of Conviction. But the same Difficulty which occurs against the Notion of small Vacuums diffus’d in the World, stands good for those imaginary Spaces beyond the World. The Mind cannot digest an Extension that is penetrable, nor comprehend that a Thing can exist, and have Extension, without having Parts. Where-ever there is Extension, there is always Matter. There cannot be Space therefore without Matter; and whatsoever Limits I prescribe to the World, my Mind still conceives new Spaces beyond it. Therefore Matter must needs be infinite.

Consider, dear *Brito*, how obscure this Question is, and what an impenetrable Cloud has conceal’d the Truth of it for ever from the Eyes of Mankind. As it is impossible for them to know the finite Bounds of Matter, or its Infinity, the Divisibility of that same Matter is another Secret of which they will be eternally ignorant. How can it be conceiv’d, on the one hand, that in the Foot of a Gnat there are as many Parts as there are in the whole World? For, if Matter be divisible *ad Infinitum*, there is an infinite Number of Parts in the smallest Atom, as well as in the whole World. This is shocking to Reason, and yet it is a better Argument than that which is made use of by the *Epicureans*, and the *Gassendists*, when they say, That an Atom is only indivisible with regard to the inflexible Nature

Nature of its Essence which admits of no Vacuum. This Argument is a *petitio principii*; for when the Possibility of a Vacuum is deny'd, the Atom then becomes divisible. It is my Opinion, dear Brito, that without having recourse to the pretended Inflexibleness and Solidity of Atoms, it is impossible to imagine that a Foot of a Fly can be divided into an infinite number of Parts†.

IN

† *Spinoza* has set the strongest Objection of the Sticklers for the Indivisibility of Atoms in all its Force. He explains himself thus: *Magna et intricata Quæstio de Atomis semper fuit. Quidam asserunt dari Atomis, ex eo quod infinitum non potest esse majus alio infinito: et si duæ quantitates, puta A, et dupla ipsius A, sunt divisibiles in infinitum, poterunt etiam potentia Dei, qui eorum infinitas partes uno intuitu intelligit, in infinitas partes Attu dividi. Ergò, cum, ut dictum est, unum infinitum non majus sit alio Infinito, erit quantitas A equalis suo duplo, quod est absurdum. Deinde etiam quærent, an dimidia pars Numeri infiniti sit etiam infinita, et an par sit an impar, et alia ejusmodi?* There's the Objection in it's utmost Force. He could not have said more to shew how averse he is to the admitting of infinite Parts into a finite Whole, and to form an Infinity of Infinities every time that a determinate and finite Whole is divided. Let us see how *Spinoza* solves this Difficulty. *Ad quæ omnia, says he, Cartesius respondit, nos non debere ea, quæ sub nostrum intellectum cadunt, ac proinde clarè et distinctè concipiuntur, rejicere propter alia, quæ nostrum intellectum aut captum excedunt; ac proinde non nisi admodum inadæquatæ, à nobis percipiuntur. Infinitum vero et ejus Proprietates humanum Intellectum, Naturâ scilicet finitum, excedunt; adeoque ineptum foret id, quod clarè et distinctè de spatio concipimus, tanquam falsum rejicere, sive de eo dubitare, propterea quòd non comprehendamus Infinitum; et hanc ob causam Cartesius ea in quibus nullos Fines advertimus, et qualia sunt Extensio Mundi, Divisibilitas Partium Materiæ, &c. pro Indefinitis habet.* R. Cartesii Princip.

In the very Endeavour to reconcile the Idea of Infinity with Matter, the Mind is bewilder'd in its Conceptions; nevertheless the Argument of the *Cartesians* shocks all those of their Adversaries: 'Be an Atom ever so little, *say they*, the Part which is towards the East, is not the same as that which turns towards the West. These two Parts, therefore, may be divided. But as these Parts are divided, they are both for the same Reason capable of being subdivided. Consequently the Thing will be multiply'd *ad infinitum*; and as long as there is Matter, there will be two Sides.' When the Argument is carry'd thus far, the Mind starts again; and, sincerely speaking, it must be confess'd, that the most Ignorant in these Matters know as much as the most Learned. A Philosopher ought to declare, concerning all these Questions, what *Cicero* did, speaking

Philosoph. Pars 1 & 2. More Geometrico demonstr. per Bened. de Spinoza, Part 2. p. 50 & 51.

An ingenious Man and a good Philosopher has given a very judicious Answer to this Argument of *Des Cartes*, of the Truth of which *Spinoza* seems so strongly persuaded. *Des Cartes*, says he, *fights with Atoms very weakly*. We know, says this Philosopher, that there can be no Atoms, or any Parts of Matter indivisible; for, if they are Atoms, imagine them ever so small, they have an Extension. We may also, by the Help of Thought, divide each of these Atoms into two, or into many others much smaller; and, 'tis impossible that our Imagination should conceive any thing divisible, but at the same time we must have a certain Notion that this same Thing may be divided, in the same manner as if we were to decide that 'tis indivisible, the Judgment that we should pass would be different from our own Knowledge.

This Argument is of no Force, and proves nothing against the indivisible Nature of an Atom. Do Things depend for their Existence upon the different Ideas which

the

speaking of the various Sentiments concerning the Nature of the Soul: *Some Deity will decide which of these different Opinions is the true* §. It is the Divinity alone, dear *Brito*, that can know these hidden Mysteries. It has been his Pleasure that we should be ignorant of them. Why should we attempt, in vain, to discover them? The Advantage that we should reap from it, is really not worth the Trouble we give ourselves. Of what Importance is it for us to know whether Matter be divisible *ad infinitum*, provided that we know that it is divisible to such a Point as is sufficient for all the Necessaries we want? Mankind, always ready to give Attention to Things which savour of the extraordinary and the Marvellous, has been at infinite Labour for near three thousand Years, to clear up Questions that are not

the Mind conceives of them? Tho' it imagines them to be of such or such a Form, is that a Proof that they cannot be otherwise? The *Cartesian*, for Instance, conceives, by means of his Imagination, that an Atom is divisible, and from thence he concludes against its Indivisibility. The *Epicurean* Philosopher thinks just the contrary, that an Atom is exempt from Division; and, according to the Maxim of *Des Cartes*, having once imagined it to be indivisible, he does not scruple to affirm that it really is so. At this way of arguing they will both have Reason on their Side; tho', nevertheless, the Opinion of one of them is erroneous. But if *Des Cartes* had been strenuously prepossess'd with the Definition of an Atom, he would never have conceiv'd it divisible by reasoning after this Manner. An Atom has Extension and Parts, but this Extent, and these Parts, make one Whole, which is perfectly solid and simple, because it is eternal, because it is not the Work of a Mixture, and because there is no Vacuum in the close Union of its Parcels, and 'tis consequently indivisible. *Des Couture's* Remarks upon *Lucretius*, Tom. 1. p. 348.

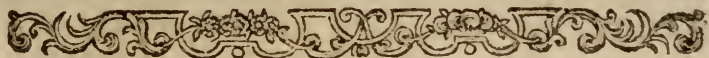
§ Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis videt. *Cicero.*

to be resolv'd; and they really ought to be taken off from so unprofitable a Study as makes them lose that Time which might be employ'd to much better Advantage. But the common Cause which engages most People in wrong Studies, is, their having annex'd the Idea of Science to such Knowledge as is vain and useless; and so blinded are they by their Prejudices, that they have preferr'd the superficial Sciences to those which are solid and necessary.

When a Man, *says a great Nazarene Philosopher* §, takes it into his Head to become learned, and when he is once fir'd with an Ambition to be an universal Scholar, he hardly ever examines what Sciences are most necessary for him, either for his Behaviour as an honest Man, or for the Conviction of his Reason; but he only looks upon those who pass in the World for learned Men, and upon what there is in them which renders them considerable.' This is the very thing that makes many young Men in love with impertinent and useless Studies: They bring several dangerous Prejudices home with them from the College. They have been made to believe, that their Tutor, a School-Philosopher, a prodigious Admirer of Chimeras, was a great Man; and they think they cannot do better than to follow his Pattern.

Farewell, dear Brito; live content and happy; may God abundantly prosper thee.

§ *Mallebranche's Search after Truth. Lib. III. Part I. Chap. IV. p. 84.*



L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt,
formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.*

PARIS is a Place, dear *Isaac*, one cannot leave without Regret; but, as loth as I am to go from it, this probably is the last Letter I shall write to thee from this City; for, I shall be going in three or four Days for *Lisle* in *Flanders*, and from thence I shall proceed to *Brussels*. The new Countries which I shall see will supply me with ample Matter for new Reflections, which I shall communicate to thee very punctually.

In the Letters which I have wrote to thee from *Paris*, I have endeavour'd to give thee the most exact Account that I could of the Manners and Customs of its Inhabitants. Thou must have made such an Acquaintance, by thy Travels to the Courts of *Germany*, that, to be sure, thou canst with Ease supply what I may have forgot, or not sufficiently explain'd to thee: However, I think I have left out nothing material. I have given thee an Account of the Courtiers, Ministers, Lawyers, Burghers, Scholars, Ecclesiastics, and the common People; and when I have talk'd to thee of the Spiritual Directors, and their Votaries, I think I shall not have omitted any one Class whatever.

The Mystic Class forms a sort of separate Republic in *France*, which has its particualar Laws, Usages and Customs: They that are the chief and

the most respected of this Class are called *Directors*, who are they that settle and order every thing that ought to be done, who have absolute Power in their own Hands; and tho' they are in some sort oblig'd, in certain Cases, to have recourse to the Pontiffs, commonly dispense themselves from it, and decide the most important Questions without Appeal.

The Mystic Sect is much more numerous in Women than in Men. I propose to give thee an Account chiefly of the Directors; the rest consisting of Nuns, old Widows, superannuated Wives, and young Women, who, tho' they are not shut up in Monasteries, yet renounce Marriage. They are call'd Sisters, and are of several Sorts: The chief are the Sisters of the Third Order, the Sisters of the Rosary, the Sisters of the Scapulary, the Sisters of St. *Domini*c, the Sisters of the Cord of St. *Francis*, &c. These are all distinguished by a different Habit. Those of the Scapulary have a grey Gown, and a black Petticoat. Those of the Third Order are, on the contrary, dress'd half black and half white. All these Sisterhoods are under the command of certain Monks, who are admitted their Directors. There's great Contention among the Friars for this Post; for thou need'st not be told, dear *Isaac*, how much pleasanter it is to be at the Head of a Battalion of young Women, than to have the Command of a Parcel of old Wives, and decrepid Widows. The States of the Mystic Nation may therefore be divided into three different Classes. The first is compos'd of the Directors of the Girls; the second of those who have the Charge of the Widows, in which Number there are always some whose Charms are not all faded: And the third consists of those who are at the Head of the old Wives. This is an inconvenient, troublesome and disagreeable Office; but there is no attaining to the other two without

first

first serving in this. The Directors, who have the Care of the old Wives, must not expect to see any tender frisky Lamb among their old Ewes.

Whoever enters into the Mystic Sect must absolutely renounce all the Pleasures of the marry'd State. Widows and Maids are authoriz'd, by their Condition, to become Members of it without Examination; but a marry'd Woman must promise to forget all the Joys of *Hymen*. There are few young Wives that can prevail upon themselves to enter into the holy Sisterhood upon that Condition. And such as would put such a Constraint on themselves, are hinder'd from it by their Husbands, who are not for keeping that rigorous Fast which is injoin'd by the Mystic Religion.

This Sect has its particular Saints as well as Customs. One *Dominic*, a noted Persecutor, who instituted the monstrous Tribunal of the Inquisition, is one of its chief Deities: The next in order to him, are *Clara* and *Rose*, two Nuns; and *Francis de Sales* is in the 4th Rank among those Patrons of Mysticalty. These Men and Women, in their Life-time, publish'd several Books full of the Maxims of their Faith. A Nun, nam'd *Theresa*, has left a complete Collection of all the Follies of her distemper'd Brain, and disturb'd Imagination, which Book passes for an inestimable Piece, and is held in as great Veneration by the Mystics as the Alcoran is by the Mahometans.

The Mystic Religion, which is commonly the Introduction to Quietism, is an Opinion said to be deriv'd from the Eastern Monks. It holds, that as soon as an immediate and intimate Union is form'd with the Divinity, a meer passive and inanimate Contemplation supplies the Place of all the Virtues. This Opinion authorizes the greatest Irregularities, overthrows good Manners, and renders all Actions in-
different

different. Nevertheless, as the Directors find their Account in it, there's hardly one of 'em but inclines to it secretly, tho' they are oblig'd to constrain themselves, and to keep Silence, for fear of animating the Zeal of the Magistrates, who watch all Opportunities to root out this Doctrine, which the Monks reveal to such of their Votaries only as they have chosen by way of preference to enable them to put the Precepts of Quietism in Practice.

Thou perceivest, dear *Isaac*, that there's nothing so commodious as a Religion that permits the Body the Use of all prohibited Pleasures, provided the Mind is elevated at the same time to Heaven; a Doctrine so whimsical and monstrous, that none but Monks are capable of establishing it! If every Day did not furnish Proofs that this pernicious Opinion has but too many Adherents, one would take it to be one of those Chimæras which the Divines invent sometimes merely for the Pleasure of opposing them. Yet true it is, that the Quietists are only charg'd with those Opinions. The Person who prov'd of most Credit to them was one *Michael Molinos*. He compos'd two Pieces, one intitled, *The Spiritual Guide*, and the other, *The Particular Communion*. In the very Midst of *Rome*, nay, often in the Places set apart for religious Exercises, he and his Adherents render'd this System fatal to many a Husband at *Rome*; and *Molinos*, with his Heart in Heaven, made many a Cuckold upon Earth. In fine, the jealous *Italians* awak'd out of that Lethargy in which the public Exhortations and Discourses, and the seeming Life of this hypocritical Doctor had plung'd them. He was anathematiz'd, and condemn'd for his Life to a Prison, in which he dy'd. This was all the Punishment the Inquisition inflicted upon him, tho' it had caus'd a Man to be burnt for doubting the

Truth.

Truth of the Massacre of the 11000 Virgins, or the great Virtue of Indulgences. But that Tribunal did not think the Crime of *Molinos* was considerable enough, he having scarce got more Bastards in all his pious Extacies, than honest King *Charlemagne* had formerly, who, nevertheless, merited Canonization by it.

The Error of this Doctor, so agreeable to corrupt Hearts, is the Practice of many of the Mystic Directors, especially of those of the first Class; and there are many Sisters of the Scapulary, and the Rosary, who, having renounced Marriage to embrace a purer and more perfect State, taste all the Pleasures of Love, in order to promote their Advancement to that State of Perfection.

The chief Books that contain this commodious Doctrine are, 1. *Mental Prayer*, compos'd by a Barnabite, one of the most sanctify'd, and most vigorous Monks, that ever was in the *Nazarena* Religion.

2. *A short and easy Method of Prayer; and the Song of Songs of Solomon interpreted according to the Mystic Construction*; two Pieces of Dame *Guyon*, a most staunch *Molinist*, who compos'd them after a tedious Exercise, by which she had familiarly acquainted herself with the Custom of solacing her Body upon Earth, and exercising her Mind at the same time in Heaven.

3. *The Collection of the Reverend Father Girard's Letters*, containing an Abridgment of the most crafty Maxims of Quietism, for the Use of the Damsels *Guyot*, *Batarelle*, *Lione*, and especially the Sister *Cadiere*, his favourite Penitent; with a Collection of instructive Sentences tending to Perfection. To this Book is added a *Philosophical Commentary*, by the same Reverend Father, upon those famous

famous Words, *Abandonnez vous, et laissez faire*; i. e. *Lie still, and be passive.*

4. *The Advice of Father Sabbatier, a Confidant of the illustrious Father Girard, for the Use of the Mystic Directors, a Work in which the young Directors are taught the necessary Expedients for avoiding the Consequences that may happen from the Indiscretion of the Reverend Sisters associated to sublime Quietism* §.

Those, dear *Isaac*, are the chief Writings that are the continual Meditation of such as are initiated in the *Molinists* Sect, to which there's no Admission but by passing thro' the Mystic; for the latter's a sort of Seminary to the other, and has its Visions, Trances, Miracles, and pleasing Contemplations like the *Molinists*, but does not admit of the Separation of the Actions of the Body and the Soul.

The Pontiffs † are very watchful against the spreading of such dangerous Opinions; they severely condemn *Molinism*, and don't much like those that give into the Mystic Ideas. They wou'd fain have the *Nazarene* Religion exercised in its Purity, and watch the Clergy, with whom they trust the Direction of the People; but they take care almost to no manner of purpose. 'Tis not the secular Priests that cause a Disorder in the Popish Faith. They are generally a good sort of People, as I have already told thee, and their Manners are intirely the reverse of the Behaviour of the Monks. The Curates, which is the Name that the *French* give to the Clergy who

§ The latter Piece was never publish'd, and is probably an Invention of *Aaron Monceca* for the Jest sake; at least this is the Opinion of the Marquis by whom these Letters were translated from the Original Language into the *French*.

† The Bishops.

have

have a particular Quarter to take care of, are commonly charitable to the Poor, and careful to relieve Families. They assist the Orphan, protect the Widow, keep up an Union among Kindred, decide Quarrels, and in short are really the Fathers of the People under their Care. Some of the Bishops act with the same Prudence and Wisdom. I don't understand, therefore, how the *French* come to be so silly, when they have such honest Men among them for their Priests, to suffer among them, and to maintain a Parcel of Drones, Knaves, and Debauchees, who, in one Moment, destroy all that the others have taken so much Pains to establish.

What I am going to say to thee, will, perhaps, appear to thee as a Paradox; yet 'tis never the less true. *The Monks, in France, are hated by the great Men, despis'd by the Clergy, ill-belov'd by the common People*; yet they find a way to get more Credit and Wealth than any body in the Kingdom. I have taken a great deal of Pains to find out what may be the Occasion of it, and am apt to think, that the different Opinions into which the Kingdom has been divided, as to several Articles of the *Nazarene* Faith, have not a little contributed to the Support of the Monks. Before the Reformed were banish'd from *France*, the *Nazarene* Papists protected the Monks in spite of their Adversaries. *Jansenism* succeeding in the place of *Calvinism*, the Monks split into Parties, each maintaining its own Adherents; and really, if the Monks are good for any thing, 'tis to foment Division. This is, I think, what has preserv'd the Monks in *France*, tho', perhaps, some Day or other, when the *French* have been made sensible of the Mischiefs which they are the Authors of, they will be so wise as to send them out of the Kingdom.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy.



L E T T E R LXXXIX.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Cairo,
who was formerly a Rabbi, at Constantino-
ple, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

THY last Letter but one gave me infinite Pleasure. 'Tis impossible to argue more consequentially. Thy Ideas are clear and distinct, and it were to be wish'd that a great many Questions, which are rather obscur'd than illustrated, were handled in the same manner.

Most of the Authors who have wrote upon abstracted Matters, have even made them more difficult, by perplexing and confounding them. Commentators are generally apt to embarrass the Text so much, that there's no coming at the true Sense of the Original which they have been at work upon. And sometimes an Author, good enough in himself, becomes despicable by reason of the Blunders and Absurdities of his Commentators.

I am at this very time reading a Book, for which the Nazarenes, and our Brethren the Jews, have affected a great Contempt; yet it contains excellent Things, full of Piety, and such as have a Tendency to give the Mind a great Idea of the Power of God. This Book is the Alcoran, written in its primitive Language without any Commentary, and 'twas given me by an Arabian. I know that the Book has Errors in it, which are contrary to the Books that are left us by our Prophets: But setting aside
certain

certain Principles of Religion, and considering the Alcoran only as the System of a Philosopher, I think it deserves the Esteem of good Men, and is useful for the Correction of Manners.—There is not a Philosopher, I don't except even the most Learned among the Moderns, that has given more convincing Proofs of the Existence, and the immense Power of the Deity, than *Mahomet*. Hear how he explains himself in the Chapter of *Mercy*, where he makes the Deity say, ‘ We have created you all. If you ‘ don't believe it, consider all the good Things ‘ which you enjoy. Did you create them yourselves? ‘ We have appointed that you should die. We can, ‘ if it so pleaseth us, put other Creatures like to ‘ you in your place, and metamorphose you into ‘ another Figure which you know not. We have ‘ caused the Soul to enter into your Bodies. If you ‘ don't attend to this, only consider your Tillage ; ‘ do you cause the Earth to produce its Fruits, or do ‘ I? If I please, I will make your Fields dry as ‘ Stubble without Corn: And yet you are proud, ‘ and you say, *What ! shall our Corn that we have ‘ sown be lost? No, surely, we will save it.* Silly ‘ Creatures ! how can you talk at this rate? Lift up ‘ your Eyes to Heaven. Consider the Water that ‘ falls from it, and serves to quench your Thirst. ‘ Do you cause it to descend from the Clouds, or do ‘ we? If it pleaseth us, it shall not fall at all ; or ‘ we will cause it to come down in such a manner, ‘ that it shall be of no Service, either to fructify ‘ your Fields, or to quench your Thirst*.’

Now I ask thee, dear *Monceca*, what thou think'st of this Passage? What a Majesty there is in it ! What grand Ideas does it not offer to the Imagina-

* *Mahomet's* Alcoran, translated out of the *Arabic* into *French*, by *M. du Ryer*, p. 112.

tion ! How sublime is his Representation of the immense Power of the Deity, after having plainly prov'd his Existence by these few Words ! *We have created you all. If you don't believe it, consider all the good Things you enjoy. Did you create them yourselves?* This is the most invincible Argument of the Necessity of the Divine Being ; because we know there was a Time when we did not exist, we are under a Necessity of looking backwards to one Eternal Cause, to one Supreme Being, which having produc'd all Beings, maintains them in the Order wherein we see them. This Regulation, so beautiful, and so wise, is a perpetual Proof of the Existence of the Deity : 'Tis a convincing Argument, incessantly before our Eyes, which we cannot open without beholding the extraordinary Works form'd by this Almighty Being ; and, when we shut them, we contemplate them no less with the Eye of our Mind. Even this tells us, that such a thinking intelligent Being cou'd not be the Consequence of a Principle ignorant, and acting without Knowledge. Consequently, the Majesty and Existence of the Divine Being makes itself known to the Blind, as well as to those that have Eyes to see : For, as soon as a Man exists, he has the Means and Capacity of knowing it ; because he thinks, and is capable of reflecting upon his Thought.

But tho' Men have the Happiness to be able to advance themselves to the Knowledge of a God, they ought not, therefore, to pretend to penetrate into the Secrets which he has been pleas'd to conceal from our Sight.—'Tis absurd for finite Creatures to pretend to know the Attributes and Qualities of the Infinite Being to Perfection. How ridiculous is it for the Creature to pretend to aspire to the Creator, and to match itself with him ! The Knowledge which we have of the Divine Being, is the chief

Motive

Motive that ought to determine our Obedience. There is nothing more senseless than to endeavour to limit the Power of God, and to think that a Thing cannot be, because we do not comprehend how 'tis possible for it to be. That's the Source of the various Errors that spring up in all Religions. Let us see, dear *Monceca*, how *Mahomet* confutes the Unbelievers who offer to set Bounds to the Celestial Power, and deny the Possibility of the Resurrection of the Body. *What!* say the Wicked, *shall we die, shall we be Dust, and shall we return to the World? This is a Change very remote!* ' And why shall they ' not rise again? Don't they see the Firmament over ' their Heads, how we have form'd it, how we ' have adorn'd it, and that there is no Fault in it? ' We have stretch'd out the Earth, cast up the ' Mountains, and have caus'd all manner of Fruits ' to be produc'd as a Sign of our Almighty Power. ' We have sent down the Rain from Heaven, and ' have thereby caus'd the Gardens to produce Corn ' agreeable to the Reaper, and Palm-trees some ' higher than others to enrich our Creatures. We ' have given Life to the dead, dry, and barren ' Ground. Thus shall the Dead rise from the ' Grave *.'

All the Systems of Philosophy cannot convey a more majestic Idea of the Power of the Divine Being. He, who out of *dry barren Earth* form'd Man, can undoubtedly raise him from the Grave: 'Tis not more difficult for the Divine Being to order Matter to join itself again together, than it was for him to animate it, and put it in Motion. He who made all Things out of Nothing, cannot he do whatever he will? Is there any thing that is more repugnant to our frail Reason, than to think that

* Alcoran, in the Chapter *de Re judicata*, p. 308.

something can be made out of nothing ! Yet, not only Religion, but sound Philosophy, tells us, that Matter must have been created by God. For if it was co-eternal with God, it would be independant of him, because it would not owe its Creation to him, and he could not destroy it. In that Case, God would not be Omnipotent, and there would then be a Being as antient as he, which would not be dependent on him. The Divinity would then be no longer Infinite, but would be limited in his Power, whereas the Infinite Being ought to be Infinite in all his Attributes. Matter would in that Case be a rival Divinity to the former. What Absurdities follow from a System which admits the Co-eternity of Matter with God ! If a Man makes use of his Reason, he must own that God has created all Beings out of Nothing. But can we comprehend this Mystery ? No, surely. Why then should we offer to limit the Power of God in other Things, since there is nothing which his Power cannot easily execute, since it has been able to produce all Things from Nothing ? ‘ The Supreme Being, *says* Mahomet, ‘ knows those that are unjust. He has the Keys of ‘ Futurity in his Power. No one knows it but He. ‘ He knows every thing that is in the Earth, and ‘ in the Sea. He knows the Number of Leaves ‘ that fall from the Trees, and the Number of ‘ Atoms that are in the Darknes of the Earth. ‘ There is nothing dry nor green upon the Earth, ‘ but what is written in the Book of Light. ’Tis ‘ he who causes you to die, and who knows your ‘ Deeds both of Good and Evil.—Remember the ‘ Day that he pronounc’d, *Let there be*, and every ‘ thing *was*.—He knows Things present, future, ‘ and past. He is most wise, and nothing is hid ‘ from him.—*Abraham*, upon seeing a very clear ‘ Star in the Night, ask’d himself, if it was his ‘ God ?

‘ God? No, *said he to himself*, my God does neither rise nor set *.’

Consider, dear *Aaron*, all these different Passages, and see what Ideas they present to the Imagination; judge afterwards of the Book by these Scraps of it. The moral Precepts diffus’d in this Work, are beautiful, edifying, and suitable to the Sublimity of the Notions which it gives of the Divinity. These are some of them: ‘ O you that believe! you have
‘ Children and Wives that are, perhaps, your Enemies. Beware of their bad Inclinations; but if you
‘ pardon them, and keep at a Distance from them,
‘ God will be gracious and merciful to you. Riches
‘ and Children often hinder you from obeying God.
‘ But know, that he abundantly rewards good Men.
‘ Fear him with all your Power. Hear his Com-
‘ mandments. Obey him. Give Alms. He that
‘ is not covetous, will be very happy. If you lend
‘ any thing to God, he will return you manifold,
‘ he will pardon your Sins. He loves Benefactions;
‘ for he himself is very merciful †.’

Suppose that a *Turk* acts according to the Precepts laid down in this Passage, will not he be, dear *Mon-
ceca*, an honest, virtuous, pious Man, and worthy of the Esteem of all the Universe? Is there any Moral more pure than that which recommends Charity, and the Pardon of Offences, and which founds the Mercy of God on the Exercise of those Virtues? Why, therefore, must a Book be despis’d, that contains Precepts so conducive to the Happiness of Society? I should be glad to see the Good distinguish’d from the Bad in the Alcoran, and to hear some Things approv’d as well as others condemn’d. The Generality who blame this Book, have never read it, and perhaps, if they knew it better, they

* The Alcoran in the Chapter of *Gratifications*, p. 98.

† The Alcoran in the Chapter of *Fraud*, p. 110.

would give it a different Character. How many Tracts are there of our Rabbies, and even of the *Nazarene* Doctors, that would deserve to be as severely censur'd as the Alcoran, tho' they are not so much as talk'd of? At least I am sure that those Works don't convey a greater Idea of the Divine Being. If we were to make a philosophical Disquisition into the Books of certain *Spanish* Doctors, what Errors should we not find in them? How many Principles contrary to good Sense, and right Reason? How many Maxims pernicious to the Welfare of Society? What a fine Book would it make, if all the Monkish Impertinences were to be collected? One that should go about to write a *History of the Vagaries of the Mind of Man*, would not fail of Matter in Memoirs so fruitful and so copious.

The Talmud of the Rabbies is a hundred times more ridiculous than the Alcoran. Don't think, dear *Monceca*, that the Spirit of Party influences my Opinion. In despising the Talmud, I forget that I am a Caraites. I don't condemn that monstrous Work as a Partisan and an Abettor of an Opinion opposite to the Rabbies; but as a Philosopher, and as a Man that endeavours to make use of the Light of Nature. I make no doubt but some Day or other thou wilt be of the same Opinion as I am. 'Tis impossible, if thou makest use of thy Reason, but thou must embrace the Opinions of the judicious Caraites. Examine the absurd Sentiments of the Rabbies; study those of their Adversaries; make use of the natural Reason which Heaven has given thee, and then determine thyself. Thou wilt soon be acquainted what is true *Judaism*, and that pure Law which was given to us by our Prophet and Legislator. Consider, dear *Monceca*, that the *Jewish* Rabbies exclaim against certain fabulous Stories that are in the Alcoran. They laugh at the Weakness
of

of the *Turks* to credit such Chimæras: But *Mahomet* never said such impertinent Things as the Rabbi *Abraham*, who imagin'd that the Satyrs or Fauns were real Creatures, tho' imperfect, because God was overtaken by the Eve of the Sabbath before he cou'd give them the finishing Stroke; and that those Monsters, because of the Sacredness of the Day, retir'd to the Mountains and Forests to conceal themselves, from whence they return'd afterwards to torment Mankind.

Is it possible for the Mind of Man to be more bewilder'd than to compare God to a vile Sculptor, who not being able to finish his Work at the Week's End, left it imperfect? Reconcile this Absurdity, dear *Monceca*, with the Grandeur and speedy Execution of the Operations of the Divine Being, who no sooner gives the Word but Nature obeys, and changes its Face. As he created in an Instant, so he can in an Instant destroy. He said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.* He need only say, *Let that Light cease, and there must be Darknes.*

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; and may the God of our Fathers enlighten thy Mind, and make thee a Carait.





L E T T E R X C.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt, for-
merly a Rabbi at Constantinople.*

I Think, dear *Isaac*, that thy Reflections upon the Alcoran are very judicious, and am firmly persuaded, that the Generality of the People who despise this Book, without endeavouring to distinguish the Good from the Bad, are blinded by the Force of Prejudice. Most of the *Nazarenes* have a mistaken, absurd, and even ridiculous Notion of the *Mahometan* Religion; and they would not be so much surpriz'd at the *Turks* Attachment to *Mahometanism*, if they did but coolly examine the Motives by which they may be engag'd to persist in it.

'Tis an easy Matter to call People weak and ignorant, whose Virtues or Qualities are unknown. 'Tis only to suppose that their Qualities have no Affinity with the Sciences; and then 'tis inferr'd, that by consequence their Ideas must be gross, confus'd, and very different from those which are acquir'd by Study. But it generally happens, that when a false Position is laid down, the Inference drawn from it is not conformable to the Truth. The *Nazarenes* are guilty of this Fault. They form a Judgment of the Genius of the *Mahometan* Divines and Philosophers, by the odious and fabulous Accounts that are daily publish'd by ignorant Travellers and Monks, who watch all Opportunities to decry every thing that is not agreeable to their Opinion. 'Tis upon
the

the Credit of the Fables invented by some *Greek* Authors, that the *French, Spanish, English, Italian, German* Authors, &c. have reported several Things of *Mahomet*, that are not only false, but even contrary to Reason. There is nothing so impertinent, and more contrary to the Truth of History, than the Idea which *Morery* has given of *Mahomet* *.

If we may take that Priest's Word for it, this Legislator was a Man of a mean Extraction, who associated himself with the Monk *Sergius*, and with him compos'd the Precepts of his Law, and then got it embrac'd by a Gang of Robbers, of which he was the Ringleader. Is not that a very edifying Account; and have not they, who judge of *Mahomet* by this Relation, good Reason to think those People very weak who have embrac'd his Doctrines? But perhaps they would be of another Mind, if they had a right Notion of this false Prophet, and did but know the Extent of his Genius. The learned *Nazarenes* were appriz'd of this, but they thought it not worth their while to undeceive People; and that it was necessary to leave them in an Error which favour'd *Nazarenism*. ' *Mahomet*, says the famous ' *la Croze* †, had very fine natural Parts. He was ' agreeable, polite, and obliging, and fit to converse ' with all Mankind. This is the Testimony given

* *Mahomet*, the false *Arabian* Prophet, was born, according to some Authors, on the 5th of May, Anno 570. The Name of his Father, who was a *Pagan*, was *Abdella*? and that of his Mother, a *Jew*, was *Eminia*; both of the Dregs of the People. His Religion, which was partly compos'd of *Judaism*, and partly of the Dreams of Heretics, was embrac'd by the Wicked and Robbers, who knew neither God nor Justice. *Morery* in the Article of *MAHOMET*.

† *Historical Dissertations on various Subjects*, tom. i. p. 38.

‘ of him by an Oriental Christian, who has written
 ‘ a History of *Mahometanism* in *Arabic*. As to *Ma-*
 ‘ *homet’s* Genius, ’tis natural to conclude that he
 ‘ was an extraordinary Man; and this is plain, even
 ‘ from the Translations of the Alcoran; tho’ by the
 ‘ Confession of those who understand the Language
 ‘ in which it is written, they come far short of the
 ‘ Beauty and Majesty of the Original.’

Many other learned *Nazarenes* have done the
 same Justice to *Mahomet*; but their Writings being
 only known to Scholars, have not defeated the
 Prejudices of the Vulgar, which increase every Day,
 and are fomented by the Lyes of some *Nazarene*
 Divines. Bayle reports one invented by a Monk,
 and the Reflections he makes upon it are worthy of
 such a Philosopher as he was: ‘ A Benedictin of
 ‘ the *Netherlands*, says he *, publish’d a Book in
 ‘ *Latin*, and in *Low Dutch*, in which he inserted a
 ‘ great many idle Stories, and this among the rest:
 ‘ A *Genoese* was so very curious to see what the
 ‘ *Moors* or *Saracens* do in their Mosques, that
 ‘ he got into one of them by Stealth, though he
 ‘ knew very well ’twas their Custom to put all
 ‘ Christians they find there to Death, or to compel
 ‘ them to abjure their Religion. There was such a
 ‘ great Crowd about him, that he could not go out,
 ‘ when an Accident happen’d, which made him wish
 ‘ himself elsewhere: for Nature was very pressing
 ‘ for an Evacuation. He could not contain himself
 ‘ for his Life, and the ungrateful Smell that came
 ‘ from him made such a Discovery of his Condition,
 ‘ that he thought he had not long to live. But he
 ‘ slipp’d his Neck out of the Halter, by pretending
 ‘ that being costive for a long time, he came on

* Historical and Critical Dictionary, in the Article of *Mahomet*.

‘ purpose to recommend himself to *Mahomet*, and
 ‘ that he had found immediate Relief. Upon this
 ‘ they took off his Breeches, and hung them up in
 ‘ the Mosque, crying out, A MIRACLE! A MI-
 ‘ RACLE! Thus does one Half of the World make
 ‘ a Jest of the other; for to be sure, the *Maho-*
 ‘ *metans* are not ignorant of all the ridiculous Sto-
 ‘ ries that are told of the Monks; and if it were
 ‘ true that they knew nothing of ’em, yet ’tis rea-
 ‘ sonable to believe, that they propagate Lyes and
 ‘ impertinent Stories against the Christian Sect. If
 ‘ they knew the Story of the *Flemish* Benedictine,
 ‘ they would say, perhaps: “ These rare Miracle-
 ‘ mongers forge very gross ones for us! Not but,
 ‘ if they pleas’d, they could invent very cunning
 ‘ ones; but they keep them for themselves; they
 ‘ drink the Wine, and send us the Lees.”

I will make some small Addition, dear *Isaac*, to
 the wise and disinterested Moral of this *Nazarene*
 Philosopher. If he had travell’d among the *Turks*, he
 would have been more fully convinc’d of the Ridi-
 culousness of this Story, which has no manner of
 Probability; for thou knowest that the *Nazarenes*
 who are settled in the *Levant* may not wear a Tur-
 ban, but have a Hat or Cap, tho’ they dress other-
 wise in the Mode of the *Levant*; so that ’tis as easy
 to distinguish a *Nazarene* from a *Turk*, as a *Greek*
 from a Man who dresses *à la mode de France*. How
 could the *Turks* then let this *Nazarene* stay so long
 in the Mosque ’till he was oblig’d to do his Occa-
 sions there? How did it happen, that they who
 were near him did not know him by his Hat or
 Cap? What Stratagem did he make use of, to en-
 ter the Mosque with those Badges of *Nazarenism*?
 If he was disguis’d, and had put on a Turban, he had
 no Occasion to mention the pretended Invocation
 of *Mahomet*: And, after he was once taken for a

Turks, he could run no manner of risque. A *Turk*, whose Necessities were so urgent, that he should happen to soil his Breeches, because he could not get out of the Mosque for the Crowd, would be in no more Danger than a *Parisian*, who, upon the Festival of *St. Ignatius*, should cause a Stink in the Church of the *Jesuits*. The two Sh—rs would have nothing more to do than to get the Lining of their Breeches wash'd. The Imans of the Mosque would not think that *Mahomet* would turn up his Nose at this offensive Exhalation; nor would they punish the Author of it, unless they thought he did it by way of Contempt, in which Case they would act very rationally. And surely, upon such an Occasion, the *Jesuits* would not be more gentle than the *Mahometans*. What would not they do to a *Jansenist*, who should disturb the Festival of their Patriarch after so indecent a manner? And what would not the *Jansenists* do in their Turn to a *Molinist*, who should be such a Sloven as to profane the Tomb of the *Abbé Paris* by foul Smells? Happy would it be for him if he sav'd his Life by the Expedient of adding his Folly to the Number of the Saint's Miracles; and, by making Oath, that not being of a Constitution strong enough to resist the Convulsions, the holy Deacon had perform'd his Cure by a sudden Revolution in his Bowels. All the *Jansenists* would then cry out, A MIRACLE! The Relation of the wonderful Cure of the Sh—rs would be carefully inserted in the *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*: And the Pontiff of *Montpellier* would publish a Manifesto to prove it authentic.

When the Philosophers, dear *Isaac*, consider the Partiality of Men in general, for the Opinions which they have imbib'd from their Infancy, they discover the Source of all the ridiculous Stories which the several Religions have mutually invented

of one another. What Absurdities don't the Generality of the *Turks* give out concerning the Faith of the *Nazarenes*? What Fables don't the latter invent to our Charge? To endeavour to form a Judgment of a Religion, by what certain Authors of a contrary Sect have written of it, is as ridiculous as to expect to find History in the *Tales of the Fairies*, and those of the *Thousand and One Nights*.

If one were to credit three-fourths of the *Nazarene* Doctors, the Blindness which the *Turks* continue in is only owing to their Debauchery, or else 'tis because they have no Notion of *Nazarenism*: But there is nothing so unjust as this Sentiment. The *Mahometans* know the Opinions of their Adversaries, and they have had several controversial Authors that have confuted them, and made use of Arguments strong enough to make an Impression not only upon Minds already prejudic'd, as the *Turks* are, but even upon those of impartial People, who endeavour to be determin'd by the Assistance of the Light of Nature*. 'Tis certain, dear *Isaac*, that

* The *Mahometans* have written several Books of Controversy against the Christian Religion. 'Tis worth while to know their Way of disputing with us, and this has engaged me to set down, in this Place some Extracts out of one of their Polemical Books [See these Extracts by-and-by.] I take them from the Papers of a *Spanish Mahometan*, who was Embassador from the King of *Morocco* to the States General of the *United Provinces*, 1610. This Man was a Native of *Biscay*, and probably of the Race of those *Moors*, who, for a long time, possess'd a great Part of the *Spanish* Provinces. Having disputed in *Holland* against Prince *Maurice*, and Don *Emanuel*, the Son of Don *Antonio*, King of *Portugal*, he sent them a *Latin* Letter, after his Return into *Africa*, wherein he endeavours to give them the best Account he could of his Faith. *La Croze's* Historical Dissertations on divers Subjects, tom. i. p. 47.

the more simple a Religion is, and the less 'tis incumber'd with Articles essential to Faith, the more easy is it to be defended. 'Tis this that forms the principal Beauty of *Judaism*, and that demonstrates its Dignity and its Truth. Now, there is nothing so plain, next to the *Jewish* Religion, as the *Mahometan* is. I don't speak of Ceremonies, these being Appendages which have nothing in common with the fundamental Principles that constitute a Belief necessary to Salvation: Besides, all Religions, if we except that of the Reformed *Nazarenes*, are alike overcharg'd with improper and vicious Customs, which have been introduc'd into them by little and little. A wise Man looks upon them as Things foreign, that have nothing in common with Articles that are essential. Suppose therefore, that, setting aside the Ceremonies of the *Mussulmen*, there was propos'd to a *Pagan* Philosopher, who has no Idea of *Judaism* or *Nazarenism*, a Confession of the *Mahometan* Faith; I doubt not but, after he had consider'd it, he would receive it with Submission, and would look upon the Man that should explain the Truths of it to him, as a great Man, as a superior Genius, and even as a Person enlighten'd by the Deity. That was the very Case of the first Adherents of *Mahomet*, who were almost all *Pagans*. The *Jews* and the *Nazarenes*, who join'd them, were extremely ignorant of their Religion, and had no true Notion of it. They were easily seduc'd by the Discourses of *Mahomet*. His soothing Style had the same Effect upon them as the Beauty of the first Principles of his Religion caus'd among the *Pagans*. One ought not therefore to be surpriz'd at the sudden Progress which has been made by *Mahometanism*, nor to look upon the first Men that receiv'd it as Fools or Debauchees. The wisest of the *Arabians* embrac'd

embrac'd it for no other Reason but because they were perswaded of the Truth of it.

There is nothing so majestic as the *Turks* Confession of Faith. This the most learned of the *Nazarenes* are forc'd to own, and thou thyself shall be the Judge of it, by this Summary of the *Mahometan* Creed, taken out of the Writings of an *Arabic* Author, and inserted in the Works of one of the first Genius's of *Europe* *. 'Whoever, says this Mahometan, enquires what is the Law of *Mussulmen*, let him know that the Creed of their Faith is contain'd in these Words. "I believe in one only God. I believe in his Angels, in all his Writings, and in all the Prophets whom he has sent into the World, without excepting one, and making no Difference between the Prophets and the Embassadors of God. I believe in the Day of Judgment; moreover, I believe that every thing which exists, whether it be pleasing to us or not, was created by God. This is the Summary of our Faith."

It is surprizing, dear *Isaac*, that such shining Truths, from which there naturally flows so pure a Moral, made an Impression upon the Minds of so many different People plung'd in *Paganism*? And as to the *Nazarenes* who embrac'd *Mahometanism*, 'tis a Mistake to think that the *Mussulmen* Doctors did not make Objections to them, enough to puzzle any

* Quisquis igitur scire cupit, quæ sit lex Mauris, sciatur Summam et Symbolum fidei Maurorum iis includi verbis. "Credo in unicum solum Deum. Credo in Angelos ejus, omnibus Scripturis et Prophetis, quos misit in Mundum, nemine excepto, nullâ factâ differentiâ inter aliquos Prophetas, et Nuncios ejus. Credo in Diem Judicii. Credo præterea quicquid est, sive nos arri-deat, sive non, creatum a Deo. Hæc est summa quæ in inquirenti statim fiet palam." *La Croze's Historical Dissertations, &c.* p. 51, 52.

People who were not well inform'd of their Religion. They have made use of the strongest Arguments of the Philosophers to authorise their Sentiments ; and the *Mahometan* Divine, whom I have been quoting, employs the very same Arguments, to establish *Mahometanism*, that serv'd as the Foundation of all the *Cartesian* Philosophy, that is to say, the Necessity of examining the Truth of a Thing by the Assistance of natural Reason, which cannot deceive us, because 'tis the only Means that God has given us, to distinguish Truth from Falshood. *God Almighty*, said that *Arabian*, never required nor commanded that *Man* should believe what cannot be comprehended. On the contrary, he has given to *Man* an Understanding fit to comprehend every thing that is possible, and every thing that necessarily exists, and to deny and not qualify'd to comprehend every thing that is impossible *. As soon as this Principle is granted, dear *Isaac*, a Man must be very much prejudic'd, or very short-sighted, if he does not perceive that Consequences might be drawn from it strongly in favour of *Mahometanism*, and that the *Nazarenes* and *Jews* who embrac'd it, might look upon it as the true Religion, and suffer themselves to be perverted to specious Errors. The Fault, dear *Isaac*, of the Divines of all Religions, is the affecting too great a Contempt of those who adhere to Opinions which they oppose. They are not content with saying that they are in an Error, but they are for depriving them at any Rate of common Sense.

Farewell, dear *Isaac* ; and live content and happy.

* Neque Deus omnipotens unquam voluit, aut jussit, debere Hominem credere id quod nec potest intelligi, nec percipi. Potius fecit Hominis Intellectum aptum ad percipiendum quidquid possibile et necessarium fuit, et ad negandum et non percipiendum, quod impossibile est. *La Croze ut supra*, p. 48.



L E T T E R XCI.

From AARON MONCECA *at* Brussels,
to ISAAC ON-IS.

AS I pass'd thro' *Flanders*, dear *Isaac*, for *Brussels*, I had Time to examine the *French* Military Forces. At 20 Leagues from *Paris* all the Towns are fortify'd ; and from *Perrone* to *Lisle* the Capital of *French Flanders*, every thing one sees breathes War. A Part of the Forces of the Kingdom is distributed into these several Places, where the Soldiers observe military Order and Discipline, with as much Strictness as if they were just going to be attack'd by the Enemy. I have been told, that before the last War they did not seem so mindful of their Duty ; and that Peace and Tranquility made them lose that Severity and Exactness so necessary in the Art of War : But they have now actually resum'd the antient Discipline which they had neglected.

The Inhabitants of these military Places are not near so happy as the other *French* are, being mere Slaves to three or four little Tyrants, who pretending the Welfare, Service and Security of the Town, put on the Airs of a Sovereign, and decide the Tranquility, and in a manner the Fate of all the Burghers. The Governors, the King's Lieutenants, and the Majors, pretty much resemble the modern sovereign Pontiffs. The former come poor into their Post, and soon get Riches ; the latter, under-

the Shelter of the Tiara, speedily raise their Friends and Relations to the highest Dignities. All this is done at the Expence of the poor People, who seem only born to be the Victims of whoever has the Charge of protecting them. I look upon the Military Governors, excepting, nevertheless, those of 'em that have Probity enough to respect Humanity, like so many Wolves set to guard a Flock of Sheep; they would be reckon'd very moderate among the Wolves their Comrades, if the Blood of one Ewe in a Day was sufficient to satisfy their voracious Appetite. *What!* they would say, *not strangle all the Flock!* Surely, *that's a Proof of infinite Moderation.* 'Tis the same thing with the Commandants in the fortify'd Towns, who are deem'd very moderate when they are for plundering only by little and little, and as it were for giving Time to breathe. I fancy that 'tis for the Use of these Military Officers that a very bad Book is compos'd intituled, *L' Art de plumer la Poule sans la faire crier*, i. e. *The Art of fleecing without raising a Clamour.* There are 20 different ways by which the Governors empty the Citizens Purse, without the Possibility of their complaining: For Example, they make an Order that the Townsmen shall keep Guard at certain Posts, make Patrols, mount the Guard, which are all military Exercises that may be bought off for a certain Sum of Money, while the Governor, in tender Friendship to the Inhabitants, is willing to excuse them from these Jobbs, and only takes their Money to employ it in procuring some little Conveniency for the Soldiers of the Garrison, whom he orders to do Duty in the Burghers room. Can there be any thing so fair and just? The Place must be guarded. All that he does is only for the *Public Service*, a couple of Magic Terms that have Virtue enough to fill the Commanders Burses. The *Jesuits* do nothing but for the *greater Glory*

Glory of God, and the Officers nothing but for the *Public Service*. These are Words which they never forget; they are included in the very Orders that they give; and whatever they do, 'tis always with this Clause. Perhaps thou wilt ask, dear *Isaac*, how 'tis possible for them to reconcile the Utility of the King's Service, with certain things that are absolutely indifferent, and sometimes even contrary to it? I must tell thee that they are never at a Loss for Expedients. But when all is said and done, they don't stand so much upon Ceremony; and provided they compass their own End, 'tis not the Business of private People to judge whether the Governor was in the Wrong to make the Service of his Sovereign a Cloak for his Avarice, or any other Fault.

The commanding Officers take a certain Toll for all Provisions that come into the Towns upon Market Days. This being what they have no Right to, the Burghers exclaim sadly against an Imposition that enhances the Price of the very Necessaries of Life; but the Governors let them grumble: 'Tis for the King's Service that his Officers should be well fed, how else could they bear the Fatigues of War? They therefore go on in their old Way, and are not at all affected with any of those impotent Clamours, which are vain Murmurings without Effect. Not but the Court checks the Oppressions of the Commanders, if they hear of 'em, and some of 'em have therefore been severely punish'd. But when there's a Necessity of declaring openly against them, all the Burghers act the same Part as the Rats did in their Council against the famous Cat which was the Destroyer of their Race. They all cry out, but none of them cares to tie on the little Bell, to take off the Mask, and to complain first. If the Court is inform'd of the Conduct of certain Governors, 'tis
a meer.

a meer Chance; for the Inhabitants are inur'd to these military Oppressions.

If a Man would live free and happy in *France* he must continue in the Provinces that are subject to the Governors-General, who are Persons of Quality that scorn such Baseness. They never live in their Governments, having great Employments which keep them always at Court. The People are govern'd by Magistrates, the Judges and the Consuls, whom they chuse themselves, and who are responsible for their Conduct to the Parliaments, to whose Jurisdiction they belong. These sovereign Companies, who are the absolute Dispensers of Distributive Justice in the Kingdom, diligently observe the Behaviour and Actions of the subaltern Magistrates.

The Governors of the Frontier Places are not the only Persons who make the Weight of their Dominion felt; for in *France*, the Military Gentry in general act despotically. The lowest Officers carry an Air of Pride and Haughtiness to the Burghers, which to me seems intolerable. One would swear that the former were the Sovereigns, and the latter only wretched Slaves. They ought however not to be so haughty: For among those whom they despise, there are some Men infinitely more to be valu'd than many others to whom they grant their Friendship, and who have no Merit to boast but hunting, swearing, and striking a Country Clown. Thus do the *French* characterise the Gentlemen who live always at their Country Seats, and whom the Military People value much more than the Burghers, because their State of Idleness gives them a grand Air, as being the most essential Part of a Nobleman.

The *French* Officer in general is amiable; he is polite, civil, obliging to Foreigners, as all his Country-

Countrymen are ; but he is infinitely stupid, always ready to ruin the Reputation of a Woman, fond of his own Person, extravagantly admires new Fashions, a Debauchee, a Man that loves good Chear without Drunkenness, ignorant sometimes to such a Degree that he can scarce read ; but then he repairs that Defect by good natural Sense, and an easy Temper : For the first two Hours he is more engaging than any other *Frenchman* ; but if one stays too long with him, he is much more impertinent.

However, dear *Isaac*, thou must not judge of all *French* Officers by this Character ; there are some of 'em that have none of those Failings so common to their Comrades, and that are as thoroughly vers'd in the most abstracted Sciences as the most eminent *Nazarene* Doctors. They are the more to be valu'd because they have all the Knowledge of the Learned, without their Pride and Vanity. An Officer is as careful to conceal his Learning, as a Philosopher is generally fond to make his known ; tho' perhaps, this Modesty may be partly owing to Policy ; for the setting up to be a Dogmatist is not the way to please a pack of young Blockheads, who had rather be told what Balls and Feasts there are to be, during the next Month, than know which is the most probable System, that of *Copernicus*, or that of *Ptolemy*. Thus, by not making a vain Parade of his Learning, an Officer avoids the Ridicule of being deem'd a Pedant ; tho' perhaps, if he were in the learned Man's Place, he would do the same thing as he, and put his Name at the Head of some Tract against Pride and Vanity.

To see a certain Philosopher greedy of Praise write against Vanity, is like a Drunkard, with a Glass in his Hand, preaching up Temperance. As to Temperance, I will tell thee a Story was told me, when I was at *Peronne*, of a Dog, that may serve as

an Instance of Sobriety. This Animal observ'd Fast Days, eat no Flesh upon *Fridays* and *Saturdays*, and would starve rather than lick a Bone upon those Days. He had many other Virtues besides; he was constant at the Matins and Vespers, and made a thousand little Curvets to express his Devotions. He rang'd about the Churches all Day long, and when any Dog was so indecent as to lift up his Leg to piss against the Walls, he bit him without Mercy, and taught him the Respect which he ought to have for those sacred Piles.

'Tis my Opinion that a Story so well attested may be a Foundation for some Monks, one Day or other, to revive the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis*. For 'tis impossible to imagine an Animal to be capable of such Knowledge, if his Soul did not bring it along with it. Consequently the Souls of Brutes must needs have innate Ideas; which I think very difficult to be prov'd; but admitting a *Metempsychosis*, this Opinion will become much more probable; nor is it difficult to reconcile this System with the *Nazarene* Faith. The Friars have nothing more to do than to place *Purgatory* in the Bodies of Animals, and then the *Metempsychosis* will be no such extraordinary Matter. They would lose nothing of their Revenue by this new System; for sure I am, that there is not a *Nazarene*, who, for fear of becoming a Post-horse for five or six Years, would not give considerable Alms to be deliver'd out of such a *Purgatory*. The Missionaries of *China*, and the *Indies*, make many Converts, by means of the *Metempsychosis*. All who are told by the *Bonzes* that they are to pass into the Bodies of certain Animals, which they think either unclean, or appointed for painful Drudgery, apply to the Black-gowns, who excuse them from the *Metempsychosis*.

Perhaps, dear *Isaac*, thou wilt think I am but in Jest, when I tell thee the Story of this devout Cur; but I have been assur'd the Fact is true, and 'tis my Opinion, that many of the *Nazarenes* incline to the Doctrin of the Transmigration of Souls. Their Doctors, even the most eminent of them, report several Stories that very much favour this Sentiment, tho' perhaps they wait till the People are better dispos'd to receive it, before they make it public. I have read in a certain Book, written by a *Nazarene* Doctor, that an Ewe of one *Francis* went to the Choir, and when she heard the Monks sing, devoutly kneel'd down, and kiss'd the Ground in Token of Reverence *.

It no more surprizes me to see a Sheep do this, than that a Dog should leap over a Stick for the Emperor and the King of *France*, and lie upon its Back, or its Belly, for the Grand Signior, and the Sophi of *Persia*. A Sheep is teachable as well as a Dog, but I can't bear to see recourse had to such Puerilities, or rather Frauds, for authorizing a Religion. It makes me shudder when I see Persons, whose Business it is to inform the People's Understandings, abuse their Ministry by propagating such Chimera's.

I cannot conclude this Epistle better than with a Passage out of a *Nazarene* Doctor, call'd *Acosta*, a *Jesuit*, by which the *Jews* our Brethren may benefit, as well as all the *Nazarenes*. *All Miracles*, says he, *are vain and insignificant, if they have not the Sanction of the Scriptures, that is to say, if they have not a Doctrine conformable to the Scriptures; for the Scriptures are of themselves a very strong Argument of the Truth.* How happy would the *Jews* and *Nazarenes* be, if the Rabbies and Monks were convinc'd of this Truth!

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and live content and happy.

* *Gazæi Pia Hilaria.*

L E T T E R.



L E T T E R X C I I.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Brussels,
to ISAAC ONIS.

I N my last Letter, dear *Isaac*, I had not room to acquaint thee of a Conversation that I had at *Lisse* with an Officer for whom the Chevalier *de Maisin*, gave me a Letter when I left *Paris*. He receiv'd me in the politest, and at the same time in the gravest manner that could be. I was surpriz'd at such a Reception; for it seem'd to be a Behaviour the very reverse of the Temper of a *Frenchman*, and a Military *Frenchman* too, who is generally gay, merry, and even frolicsome. The Chevalier *de Maisin* had appriz'd me that this Officer had a Taste for the Sciences, which made me the more impatient to be acquainted with him. After some general Conversation, we came to talk of People I had known at *Paris*, among whom I nam'd several Persons of Learning. He discover'd a great deal of Sense and Skill, in the Judgment which he form'd of their Works. *You reason, Sir*, said I to him, *so justly, that 'tis easy to perceive you don't employ all your Time in your Military Occupations.* 'I own to you, *said he*, that I spend some part of the Day in cultivating the Sciences. I wish I could devote myself wholly to Study, -but I am hinder'd by the Calling which I have embrac'd. I am not at Liberty to make intire use of my Reason but at certain Hours. I am oblig'd to be a Man but one
' Half

‘ Half of my Life; for as to the other Half, I am
‘ an amphibious sort of Animal, with too much
‘ Sense to be rank’d in the Number of Beasts, and
‘ too little to keep Company with such as are really
‘ Men. My Occupations in this State of Life are
‘ these: To all the Women I happen to be in
‘ Company with, I tell a hundred Lyes that are ge-
‘ nerally absurd and ridiculous, to which they give
‘ the Term of Gallantry. I whisper one Lady in the
‘ Ear but what I say is of no Signification; she laughs
‘ out heartily, and so do I; tho’ if any one should ask
‘ what made us so merry, we should be very much
‘ puzzled to tell. The best Answer we could make
‘ would be, that ’tis the Fashion to laugh after a
‘ Whisper, or else it would not be suppos’d that
‘ any thing had been said that was witty. I after-
‘ wards take another Lady by the Hand, and praise
‘ it for its Beauty and Whiteness, without so much
‘ as considering whether the Hand I praise so
‘ much be not ugly enough to expose what I say to
‘ Ridicule. When I am got upon this Key of Praise,
‘ like an Instrument, I must harp upon the same
‘ String. They that are not real Beauties are to
‘ blame for it. I must expect to pass for a Clown,
‘ to be in Company with a Woman and not say civil
‘ Things to her. I therefore tell her what I give out
‘ regularly every Day, and if it does not suit her, ’tis
‘ so much the worse for her. I will not be at the
‘ Pains to run a fresh Round of Gallantry for every
‘ Woman. A Fop is in one Sense like a Preacher:
‘ The latter has a certain Number of Sermons, and
‘ the former a Number of Phrases, which serve
‘ them as long as they live. As a Panegyric upon
‘ St. Clara serves for St. Rose, only changing the
‘ Name, just so the fine Compliments that are made
‘ to the Countess will do as well for the Marchio-
‘ ness. If the one is ugly, and the other handsome,
‘ that’s

‘ that’s not the Fault of the Fop. A Tradesman can
 ‘ only put off what he has in his Shop.

‘ Upon this Head, *continued the Officer*, I must
 ‘ tell you a very pleasant Adventure of mine, that
 ‘ happen’d some time since. I was in Company
 ‘ with a Woman; but being quite absent from my-
 ‘ self, I scarce consider’d whom I was talking to, when
 ‘ as she pull’d off one of her Gloves, I happen’d to
 ‘ cast my Eye upon her naked Hand: *O what a*
 ‘ *beautiful Hand is there!* I cry’d, without considering
 ‘ what I said. *You jeer me*, said the Lady with a
 ‘ Smile which denoted that she was very well pleas’d
 ‘ with my Flattery, tho’ she had really a very ordi-
 ‘ nary Hand. *I don’t know*, continued she, *where*
 ‘ *there is one so disagreeable: You are mistaken,*
 ‘ *Madam*, said I, being still heedless of what I said;
 ‘ *I know who have much worse. I defy you*, said she,
 ‘ *to shew me such.* That very Moment, whether it
 ‘ was by Chance, or whether the D—l was in it, I
 ‘ took hold of the Lady’s other Hand, and said, *Here’s*
 ‘ *one, Madam, which is at least as ugly as the other.*
 ‘ I then came to myself, and endeavour’d to make
 ‘ amends for the silly Things that I had said; but ’twas
 ‘ impossible. The Fair one with those ugly Hands has
 ‘ ever since imputed to Malice, what she ought only
 ‘ to have ascrib’d to my Distraction. I doubt not
 ‘ but such ridiculous Adventures happen every Day
 ‘ to several Persons; for ’tis impossible but a Man
 ‘ that often talks half the Day without considering
 ‘ what he says, must fall into Mistakes that expose
 ‘ him to Ridicule.

‘ The Conversation, *continued the Officer*, which
 ‘ I have with several of my Comrades, is of no more
 ‘ Use to form the Mind than that Sort of which I
 ‘ have been speaking. It runs upon the gallant Ad-
 ‘ ventures of the Garrison, upon new Fashions, up-
 ‘ on Parties of Debauchery the Night before, &c.
 ‘ You

‘ You see that the Time which I spend in hearing or
 ‘ talking of such insipid Subjects, is Time that I
 ‘ ought to look upon as intirely thrown away. I
 ‘ reap no Benefit from it. And when I am come
 ‘ to myself, and reflect upon my Manner of Life,
 ‘ I really think, as I told you before, that I am only
 ‘ a Man some Moments of the Day; and then it is,
 ‘ when being all alone in my Chamber, I endeavour
 ‘ to polish my Mind by the reading of some good
 ‘ Books, and secretly lament the senseless Pleasures
 ‘ that I am oblig’d to go abroad for.’

I was surpriz’d, dear *Isaac*, to hear a young Man
 talk so sensibly. *’Twere to be wish’d*, said I, *that*
there were many more young Men in the Service that
talk’d as much to the Purpose as you do. If that
were the Case, we should soon see among the French
what was formerly seen in Rome and Athens. The
Military Employment would be no longer reckon’d in-
compatible with the Sciences, which would be so far
from being condemn’d by the Soldiery, that they
would extend their Sway over them as well as over
the other Orders of the Kingdom. ‘ The Sciences,
 ‘ reply’d the Officer, are not held in Contempt by my
 ‘ Comrades. I plainly see that you are not yet per-
 ‘ fectly acquainted with the Genius of the *French*
 ‘ Nation. Wit is the Point and Mark which all the
 ‘ *French* aim at. In what Condition soever they are,
 ‘ they strive to be distinguish’d for their Genius.
 ‘ The Officer has this Emulation as well as the
 ‘ Clergyman and the Magistrate: and as he does not
 ‘ think it becomes a Man of Sense to despise the
 ‘ Sciences, he commends them, and this too, tho’ he
 ‘ knows nothing of them, in which he is like to many
 ‘ other People. Provided that he does but persuade
 ‘ his Comrades that he loves Reading, he is satisfy’d.
 ‘ He has a good Shew of Books in his Chamber,
 ‘ but reads them no more than a Court Abbé does
 ‘ his

‘ his Breviary. Wit is so much idoliz’d in *France*,
 ‘ that if *Fontenelle* or *Voltaire* had but given their
 ‘ Minds to learn to dance upon a Rope, they would
 ‘ soon have had the Pleasure of seeing 4 or 500
 ‘ Rope-Dancers in all the great Towns. A Friend
 ‘ of mine, who knows not whether *Des Cartes* wrote
 ‘ in *Hebrew* or *French*, says regularly 3 times a Day,
 ‘ that this Philosopher has made it very plain that
 ‘ the Sun is fix’d, and the Earth turns round it. He
 ‘ has heard something of the *Cartesian* System talk’d
 ‘ of, and it runs so much in his Head, that where-
 ‘ ever he goes almost, he communicates it, and it is
 ‘ one of the fine Topics with which he entertains
 ‘ five or six Ladies every Day. Another of my
 ‘ Companions has got by Heart half a score Verses of
 ‘ of *Racine*, eight of *Corneille*, a couple of Phrases of
 ‘ *la Bruiere*, one of *Montaigne*, and half a Verse of
 ‘ *Virgil*; and with this Furniture he thinks himself
 ‘ the most learned Man in *France*. Not a Day
 ‘ passes but he displays these Scraps of his Learning,
 ‘ and lugs them into the Conversation whether right
 ‘ or wrong. Tho’ he were to quote *Racine’s* Verses
 ‘ concerning the Scriptures, and the Passage of *la Bru-*
 ‘ *iere*, with regard to the Great Mogul’s Slippers, he
 ‘ must needs make a Shew of his Learning. You see,
 ‘ therefore, that Men of his Character cannot be
 ‘ charg’d with a Contempt for the Sciences, and
 ‘ you are mistaken in the *French* Officer, to think
 ‘ that he is proud of being ignorant.

‘ But, continued the *Chevalier de Maifin’s* Friend,
 ‘ you will be still more mistaken if you imagine
 ‘ that all the Military Gentry of *France* are am-
 ‘ bitious only of the Appearance of being learned:
 ‘ For there are many that are so in Reality, espe-
 ‘ cially among the Engineers, who are oblig’d by their
 ‘ Business to study the Mathematics; but they are
 ‘ forc’d to reconcile their Talents to the Military
 ‘ State

‘ State of Life: For, after having work’d, reason’d,
‘ and even philosophiz’d in private, they must whif-
‘ per, sing and play the Fool in public, and must
‘ discharge their Employments, and those Duties
‘ that are essential to a Beau. What Reluctance
‘ soever they have to submit to this, they would be
‘ reckon’d dull, stupid Numbsulls, and incapable of
‘ making a genteel Appearance, if they should offer
‘ to exempt themselves from it. Consequently such
‘ Officers, Sir, as you often see with their Hands in
‘ their Sashes, shrugging up their Shoulders, hanging
‘ down their Heads, and making an Appearance
‘ which seems odd to you that are a Stranger, would
‘ talk as frankly to you as I do, if you went to see
‘ them at their own Habitations; and would confess
‘ to you, as well as I, that they very often lament
‘ their hard Fate, to be the Victims of a ridiculous
‘ Custom that enslaves them to Fashions which were
‘ only introduc’d by People who having not Merit
‘ enough to recommend them by their Actions and
‘ Conversation, invented Gestures, Contorsions,
‘ prim Airs, and a fantastic Deportment, to which
‘ they annex’d great Glory. And indeed Fortune
‘ has favour’d their Views: Those Customs have
‘ prevail’d; all the *French* Nation has adopted them,
‘ and particularly the Officers: Therefore in spite of
‘ one’s Teeth they must be submitted to. All the
‘ Comfort we have is to condemn them in the Com-
‘ pany of Men of Sense. Be not therefore surpriz’d,
‘ Sir, if I have receiv’d you in a more serious man-
‘ ner than you expected. From the Chevalier *de*
‘ *Maisin*’s Letter, I conceiv’d too good an Opinion
‘ of you to entertain you after the *French* Mode.’

The sensible Discourse of this Officer, dear *Isaac*, made me reflect seriously upon the Character of the *French* Nation. There’s good Sense in all the several States, but in all those States it seems that they dare
not

not follow the Rules of Reason upon certain Occasions. The Empire of Mode destroys that of Wisdom. The Magistrates and the Clergy are under the same Difficulties as the Gentlemen of the Army. A young Counsellor of Parliament affects to be as gay as possible in his Dress. He fancies that Black is not so engaging as the other Colours. He is shy of talking Law before Company, for fear that he should be call'd a *Pedant*, and what is worse, *Robin*, a Name more dreaded by the Gentlemen of the long Robe, than Taxes and Imposts are by the common People. Is it not ridiculous that a Man should be ashamed of his Profession, especially when 'tis so honourable an one as that of dispensing Justice to Mankind, and that he should be afraid to shew that he is worthy of the Rank which he holds in Life, and that he is Master of his Business? Can one sufficiently admire, that rather than have the Satisfaction of receiving the Praise suitable to his Profession, he should chuse to be thought destitute of every thing that favours of the Robe; that is to say of every thing that he ought to have, and of what is the essential Part of his Duty?

The Clergy are no wiser than the Magistrates. The Prelates and Court Abbés would think themselves a contemptible Body, if they did not spend the Income of their Benefices in Equipages, Furniture and Plate. They would be the first to laugh any one to Scorn that should offer to act in a different manner: *He is an honest Man*, they would say, *he preaches well, but he keeps a very poor House.* A Clergyman who spent his whole Time at Court, in giving good Advice, and preaching edifying Sermons, would act a very dull Part, compar'd with a Pontiff, who spends 100,000 Crowns a Year. They don't trouble themselves whether he be ignorant, prodigal or voluptuous, provided he keep an

excellent Table. When People go to the House of a rich Abbot, they seldom enquire into the State of his Library, but very often into the Stock in his Cellar ; and many of them would blush to be reckon'd Divines. They affect to be witty, and would be raving mad to have it thought that they are not qualify'd to judge of a Tragedy, or a Romance ; nor would they have it imagin'd that they trouble themselves with the Perusal of Books of their own Order, for fear it should deprive them of their Reputation for Wit and Good-nature. They fancy that a Man who applies himself to certain Sciences is incapable of the Delicacy requir'd by others. If they made use of their Reason, and were not altogether such Slaves to Prejudices and Modes, they would soon perceive that all the Sciences are link'd to one another †, and that 'tis impossible to be perfect in any one of them, without acquiring just Notions at the same time of the others.

Farewell, dear *Isaac* ; and live content and happy.

† Etenim omnes Artes, quæ ad Humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune Vinculum, et quasi Cognatione quâdam inter se continentur. *Cicer. Orat. pro Archia Poetâ*, in Exord.





L E T T E R XCIII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Bruffels, to
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi
at Constantinople.

THE Manners of the *Flemings* and *Brabanders* are very much like those of their Neighbours the *French*, but their Genius's are quite contrary. The People of *Bruffels*, and in general of all *Brabant*, are frank, good-natur'd, and tolerably civil ; but they are excessively simple, so that their Simplicity borders a little upon Stupidity. One would swear that the Men are infected by the foggy Air of the Country ; and that the Climate has an Influence upon the Mind as well as the Body.

The Nobility are chimerically vain of their Quality, to a Degree of Folly. A Poet is not so much prepossess'd in favour of his Works, as a *Bruffels* Gentleman is in favour of his Nobility. There are more *Excellencies* in this City than in all the World besides ; for unless Excellencies be tack'd to a Man's Name here, he is neither great, valuable nor respected : And it must be confess'd that Titles are in no Part of the World so cheap as in the *Austrian Netherlands*, where they are become so common, that they have lately taken it into their Heads to set all the different States, as it were, upon a Level. The Gentlemen so infatuated with their Nobility, have obtained Leave to turn Merchants, for the better Maintainance of their *Excellencies*, who would run the Risque of being starv'd ; and the Merchants
have

have receiv'd the Privilege of ruining themselves, and of acquiring all the Titles necessary for that End †. There's no doubt but they improve the Opportunities given them to squander their Estates, and then they may begin again to trade, till they are able to purchase more new Titles to join to the former.

'Tis not the bare Titles of Count, Baron, Marquis, Duke, &c. that give Merit to a Nobleman of *Brussels*. The Antiquity of his Family has also a great Share in engaging a Respect to it. If Nobility has existed in one Family a hundred Years longer than in another, that's enough to make People excessively respected who would otherwise be very much despis'd. In a Convent, near the City of *Louvain*, there's a genealogical Tree of the Family of *Groy*, by which it is clearly proved, from Father to Son, that the Head of this Family, who was living 30 or 35 Years ago, was descended in a direct Line from *Adam*. I was hugely pleas'd to find that the *Brussels* Nobility were so modest as not to adopt the Opinion of the *Pre-Adamites*; and that they rather chose to content themselves with being descended from *Adam*, than to admit an Opinion contrary to the Book of *Genesis*.

As the Nobility of *Brabant* is very antient, their Accomplishments and their Talents are, on the other Hand, very mean. They are a little more ignorant than the *Spaniards*, and a little more superstitious than the *Portuguese*; and Ignorance is so much the Portion of the *Brabanders* in general, that the Common-people dispute this Point with the Burghers, the Burghers with the Nobility, and the Nobility with the Clergy. If we except *Justus*, *Lipsius*, *Albertus Mireus*, and a few others, I don't believe there ever

† The Placarts upon this Head were lately publish'd.

was an Author either in *Flanders* or *Brabant* worthy the Esteem of the Learned. This Country has produc'd indeed some sorry *Latin* Poets, and some Divines of the Class of *Escobar* and *Tambourin*; but I should as soon look for Snow in the Desarts of *Barca*, as for good Poets, great Orators, and able Philosophers, in *Flanders*, and in *Brabant*. The very *Jesuits* in these Provinces (which is a thing surprising and incredible) have a mean Genius, and their Politics favour of the Thickness of their Air. They are as ambitious indeed as they are elsewhere, but they don't so well know how to conceal it. They endeavour'd for 40 Years to have great Bells at *Brussels*, like those in the Parish Churches; but it being not a Thing commonly practis'd, they could not obtain Leave to have them. Despairing of Success, they apply'd to their Brethren at *Paris*, to consult them in an Affair of such Importance, which could not but stir up the Rage and Jealousy of the Curates, and the other Monks. The *Jesuits* of *Paris*, provok'd to find their Brethren so shallow, did not vouchsafe to return them an Answer themselves, but gave the Matter in charge to a mere Lay-brother, leaving it to him to direct their thick-scall'd Brethren at *Brussels*, to such Expedient as he should think most proper. This Lay-brother was proud of the Honour, and had a Mind to shew them that he had more Wit than all the *Ignatians* at *Brussels* put together. He wrote a Letter therefore to them in the Style of the *Lacedæmonian* Epistles, which only contained these Words: *Let a solemn Catechising be your Pretence, my Fathers, for which great Bells are necessary to be heard all over Brussels.* The *Jesuits* of this City luckily understood what the Lay-brother meant; they catechis'd twice a Week, and at length obtain'd their Desire.

Tho'

Tho' they have a fine Church here, yet that of the *Capuchin* Friars exceeds it. This is a very nasty ignorant Fraternity, the Excrement of the Monks, and the most unprofitable to the State. They only live upon Charity, have no public School, pretend to great Humility, go half naked, wear a long Beard, with a Cord about their Middle, and nothing looks so nasty and slovenly as their Habit. Yet the Common-people have as much Veneration for them as the *Turks* have for their *Dervises*. But notwithstanding they appear so humble and devout, there are few Friars so wicked as those of this Order, and in all Countries they are much alike. In *Spain* they were at the Head of the Rebels in *Catalonia*, and were seen upon the Ramparts of *Barcelona*, in the middle of the Soldiers, exciting them to burn and slay. During the Plague in *Provence*, while that Country smarted for its Crimes, these hypocritical Wretches had Thoughts of repeopling the Towns, and of repairing the Damage occasion'd by the Pestilence; for two of them went so far as to ravish a young Woman, that was their Fellow-servant at the Infirmary, for which they were apprehended; but they found means to get off; and by an Arret of Parliament they were both hang'd up in Effigy.

The Founder of the first Monasteries of these lazy Lubbers, was one *Francis*, a very crafty Man, who had the Secret of giving an Air of Sanctity to the most extravagant Deeds. His Disciples have writ the principal Actions of his Life, of which there is not one, how ridiculous soever, but they have extoll'd it to the Sky. *One Day*, say they *, *a Grasshopper came and gave Notice of fine Weather approaching by its singing. Francis call'd the Animal to him, and putting it on his Finger,*

* The Legend of St. *Francis*.

Come, Sister Grasshopper, says he, and sing the Praises of the Deity. The Grasshopper obey'd, and when it had made an end of singing, *Francis* thank'd it very politely, and sung himself in his Turn :

*Votre soin n'est plus necessaire :
Vous pouvez deormais partir en liberté.*

i. e.

You need do no more, and now you may freely go.

Thou wilt no doubt laugh, dear *Isaac*, at such Impertinences, and wilt be at a Loss to determine whether is the greater Fool, he that writes or he that believes them. The following is another diverting Story, which I met with in the Life of this *Francis* : He was in *Lombardy*, and not being very well, he eat a Capon for his Supper, one *Friday*, which was seven Years old, only he gave a Leg of it to a poor Man that came to his Door for Charity, who being resolved to put a Trick upon him, kept the Leg till next Day when the Saint preach'd : Then he shew'd it to the People, and said to them : ‘ See what a Flesh the Friar eats, whom you worship as a Saint ; for he gave it to me last Night with his own Hand.’ But the Limb of the Capon appear'd to every one to be Fish, so that they all thought him disorder'd in his Senses ; and when he perceiv'd this, he was asham'd, and ask'd Pardon *.

Thou perceivest, dear *Isaac*, that this *Francis* had the Art of bewitching the Eyes of the People. I dare say that his Children have lost nothing of their Father's Talents, and that they can make them believe a Pack of Rascals to be very religious Fellows.

* The Life of St. *Francis*.

Tho' there is no Inquisition at *Brussels*, yet People would run a very great Risque if they talk'd freely upon such Matters, the *Brabanders* being the most superstitious of all People living. Some Ages ago, certain Brethren of ours were burnt, who were accus'd very wrongfully of having abus'd the Mysteries of the *Nazarene* Religion ; and those unfortunate Wretches were executed upon the highest Tower of the City Walls. Its Inhabitants add the Death of our Brethren to the Number of their Miracles ; for they say, that the Fire in which they were burnt was seen fifteen Leagues round, and that two infernal Figures were seen in it, which vanish'd as soon as the *Israelites* were intirely consum'd. They make Ballads upon this pretended Adventure, to feed the Superstition of their Populace ; and, upon a certain Day, I saw one of their *Amphions* strolling about, and singing one of this Kind :

*Accourez tous, pour voir, Peuple fidele,
Ce vilain Juif appellé Jonathan,
Lequel, poussé d' abominable Zele,
Assassina le très saint Sacrement.*

i. e.

Come away, all Believers, and see this Villain of a Jew call'd *Jonathan*, who, excited by an abominable Zeal, stabb'd the most holy Sacrament.

Jacob Brito has given me an Account of several Fables which are told by the *Italians* ; but in *Flanders* and *Brabant* there are as many false Miracles, and religious Chimera's, as in *Italy*. In a Church at *Ghent* † they shew an Image that had a very long Conversation with a Female Votary, who

† The *Beguines*.

being afflicted in Mind, because her Companions were gone abroad for their Diversion, and had not taken her along with them, cry'd for mere Vexation, to see herself so slighted ; upon which, said the Image to her, *What is the Matter, my dear Child ?* Alas ! Madam, reply'd the Votary, (for 'twas a Female Figure that talk'd to her) *I know not what I have done to my Companions, but they slight me, and have refus'd to take me abroad with them.* Don't vex thyself, reply'd the Figure : *To-morrow Child, thou shalt be merry with me ; thou shalt have a Wedding of thy own, that will last for ever.* She said no more of the Matter, and did not tell her who was the illustrious Bridegroom that was design'd for her. But next Day the Votary dy'd, and the Image remain'd with its Mouth open, that there might be no Doubt of the Reality of this Miracle. The People of Ghent have an extraordinary Veneration for this Figure, so that they would not change it for the *Farnese Hercules*, and the *Venus of Medicis*. They are very much astonish'd when they tell this Story to any Strangers, and find them loth to believe it: *What ! say they, don't you believe that this Saint spoke ? Yet there is nothing so certain ; for every body in the Town affirms it, and 'tis enter'd in the Registers of the Church.* It would be in vain to attempt to dispute the Reality of these Miracles. 'Tis prudent to keep a Silence, which is necessary for all Travellers, and particularly for such as happen to be of a Religion different from that of the Country in which they are. 'Tis even dangerous in many of the *Nazarene* Countries for People to explain themselves too freely. It may be done indeed in *France* without running any Risque ; for provided a Respect be paid to the Deity, and to the Person of the Prince, little Notice is taken of other Discourse ; but in the *Netherlands*

the Monks have almost as much Credit as in *Italy*, and they are altogether as rich. I have been told, that of 35000 Acres of Land which the Province of Brabant consists of, there are no less than 29000 that are the Property of the Ecclesiastical Convents.

If the Priests don't purchase Titles in this Country, 'tis their own Fault ; for they are rich enough to procure themselves as much *Excellency*, as they please. You shall see a Prior or Superior of a Convent of *Benedictins*, *Bernardins*, &c. that has many more Ducats than many *Brussels* Gentlemen have Pence. They that are rich send their Children to spend some Time at *Paris*, where they are completely ruin'd, and exchange what is valuable of their own Country for what is vile in *France*. They affect to ape the Manners of the Fops, and their Forms of Speech. But they make such a ridiculous Figure, that those frolicsome and light Airs look as awkwardly upon them, as the Pacing of a manag'd Horse does upon a *Cheval de Frise*. A *Brabander*, who plays the Wanton, puts me in mind of the Ass in the Fable, that would needs imitate the Lap-dog. Methinks I see the long-ear'd Animal throwing his two Fore-legs amorously about his Masters Neck. *Fontaine* was in the right to say, *Let us not put a Force upon our Talent* ; for a Man become ridiculous when he attempts to go out of his Sphere : The Fondness for imitating *French* Fashions has been the Ruin of many Foreigners ; and the Brains of many a *Frenchman* have been turn'd by attempting to reflect profoundly, like the *Englishman*. I admire the Serenity and Tranquility of the *Dutch*, who let nothing trouble them, but always go on in their own Way ; and live at *Paris*, and at *London*, as they do in the Middle of *Amsterdam*.*

* Et si fractus illabatur Orbis,

Impavidum ferient Ruinæ.



L E T T E R X C I V .

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites at Cairo,
formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to
AARON MONCECA, at Bruffels.*

I N one of my Letters, dear *Monceca*, I gave thee an Account of the Manners and Customs of the *Coptes*, the Descendants of the antient Inhabitants of *Egypt*. I shall now endeavour to make thee acquainted with what I observed of the other People that live in these fruitful Provinces.

Thou knowest, dear *Monceca*, that after the Death of *Alexander*, his Successors reigned there for a long time, even till they were conquer'd by the *Romans*. They were afterwards subject to the Emperors of *Constantinople*; and then they fell under the Dominion of *Mahomet*'s Successors. At length the Sultan *Selim* made himself Master of *Egypt*, at the Expence of but one Battle. *Tonumbey*, the last Sultan of *Egypt*, who was crown'd by the *Mamelucs*, was found conceal'd, after the Reduction of *Cairo*, in a Marsh where the *Arabs* thought him safe; and the implacable *Selim*, without regard to his Prisoner's Dignity and Rank, order'd him to be hang'd. Thus died the last Sovereign of *Egypt*.

What is extraordinary in this Country is, That one finds, amongst the modern *Egyptians*, almost the same Customs, as amongst the Antients. 'Tis even impossible to be long acquainted with them without catching their Humour and their Manners. Thou
art

are not ignorant, dear *Monceca*, how much the Temper of the *Turks*, which is naturally serious and phlegmatic, differs from the gay Humour of the *Egyptians*; but by degrees they lose somewhat of their Gravity: And the Climate of this Country has such an Influence upon the Inhabitants, that though the *Turks* are brave and martial, the Children they get in this Country, become cowardly, like the other *Egyptians*, who are, to the last Degree, Poltroons. Therefore all Persons born in *Egypt* are by the Laws themselves excluded from military Posts; and though, by a special Favour, the Children of the *Turks* have the Privilege of being common Soldiers, yet this Right does not extend beyond the second Generation. And all the Militia that the Grand Signior keeps up in *Egypt*, are recruited by the *Turks* that are sent from the *European* and *Asiatic* Provinces (*).

This Degeneracy, owing to the Air of the Country, makes the People of Quality glad to mix their Blood with that of Foreigners; for Men, as well as Animals, decline in *Egypt*, from one Generation to another. The Horses here, by degrees, lose their Speed, the Lions their Strength and Courage, and the very Birds here are inferior to those of other Countries (†).

Effeminacy and Inaction, are peculiar to the *Egyptians*. And though this Kingdom is now no more than a Shadow of what it was heretofore, yet the People's Notions are the same as ever. They are Idolizers of Feasts, love Music, Shews, and Dancing, even to Excess. And the modern *Egyptians* vie with the Antients in the Taste of every thing that may be an agreeable Entertainment to

(*) *Mallet's Account of Egypt*; Part II. p. 67.

(†) *Ibid.*

the Senses. But what will undeniably prove to thee how much the Inhabitants of these Countries are wedded to their antient Customs, is, That the Difference of Religion hinders no body from conforming to them. 'Tis probable that they had Circumcision in *Egypt*, before our Ancestors were deliver'd out of their Captivity ; and the Custom is still kept up, not only among the *Mahometans*, who practise it every where, but also among the *Nazarenes*. All the *Coptes* admit of Circumcision, and maintain that their Fathers always practis'd it. If this be true, to be sure, when *Egypt* was altogether *Nazarene*, the Inhabitants were all circumcised alike ; since the *Coptes*, who are still above forty thousand in Number, tho' *Nazarenes*, cause themselves to be circumcised ; and look upon this Ceremony or Operation as very essential. They even circumcise the Daughters ; for some time ago, a wealthy *Copte* refused to marry a young Lady, who had not been circumcised, and would not consent to conclude the Marriage till his future Spouse had undergone that Operation ; which these *Nazarenes* think as essential a Ceremony as we do.

'Tis a certain Fact, that it was established in *Egypt* long before *Herodotus* ; for this Historian mentions it as one of the antient Customs of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom, and of which they did not know the first Original : ' The *Phœnicians* and *Syrians*, who are in *Palestine*, says this Author, confess that they learnt Circumcision from the *Egyptians* : And moreover the *Syrians*, who inhabit the Banks of *Thermodon* and *Parthenia*, and the *Macrons*, their Neighbours, own, That not long ago, they learnt the same thing from them——As for the *Egyptians* and *Ethiopians* since, it has been of antient Use among both those People ; I cannot say which of the two is
beholden

‘ beholden for it to the other. ’Tis however probable that the *Ethiopians* receiv’d it from the *Egyptians*, when they began to be intimate with them *.’

Some Authors, and even certain Rabbies, pretend, that it was not practis’d in *Egypt* before we departed out of that Country ; and that it was *Moses* who commanded it. Yet I don’t see any great Harm, dear *Monceca*, in supposing that he deriv’d the Use of it from the *Egyptians* ; and that finding it conducive to the Neatness of the Body, and necessary in hot Countries, he made it an essential Maxim to oblige the Practice of it with the more Exactness. What would induce me to think that the *Jews* circumcised after the Example of the *Egyptians*, is, that they have retain’d several of the Customs of those People, and such as we still observe. ‘ An *Egyptian* Man or Woman, says *Herodotus*, never kisses the Lips of a *Grecian* ; and, for the same Reason, never makes use of the Knife, Spit, and Pot, of a *Grecian* ; and never eats the Flesh of an Ox that was ever touch’d with the Knife of a *Grecian*†.’ We still observe the same Ceremonies as the *Nazarenes* ; and no doubt our Ancestors observ’d the same as the *Pagans*. From whence have we deriv’d these Customs and these Rules ? They are not commanded by the written Law, and yet they are of great Antiquity ; and the *Egyptians* practis’d them as well as we. Is it not plain that we have copy’d from them ? I look on them as Superstitions, which have nothing to do with the pure Law of *Moses*. Tho’ I were not a *Caraites*, dear *Monceca*, I should make no Difficulty to reject all those Chimeras, which I never approv’d,

* *Herodotus*, Book II. p. 102. translated by *du Ryer*.

† *Ibid*.

even when I was a Rabbi. For how is the Divinity affected by such Puerilities ? If I have a pure Heart, without Vices ; if I observe the Law, which God himself has prescrib'd to me, and which his Prophet has given to me, Why should I fear to be wanting in any thing ? Why should I attempt a thousand little Actions, which injure those that practise them, and the Religion that commands them ? Nothing is so beautiful and noble as the *Jewish* Religion, consider'd in a Caraites ; but nothing is so contemptible and deformed, as the same Religion in a Rabbi. These two different Systems of Faith are extremely opposite to each other.

'Tis not in the Point of Circumcision alone that the *Nazarene Coptes* thus retain the antient Customs of the Country. Divorce is practis'd by them, in so much that a Couple, who have been marry'd a long time, and have even had Children, make no Scruple to separate, and marry again. When the Husband parts from his Wife, he is oblig'd to give her back what she brought. The *Coptes* say, their Ancestors always did the same. They pretend, that Circumcision and Divorces have been establish'd in their Sect, Time out of Mind. The *European Nazarenes* say the contrary ; and affirm, That these Customs were only introduced by the *Mahometan* Nations when they invaded *Egypt* ; and that the *Coptes* received them from the *Arabians*, and not from the antient *Egyptians* ; they being disused at the time that *Egypt* was intirely *Nazarene*.

This Opinion has strong Proofs to support it, and I should be very much inclined to believe it. But tho' the Use of antient Customs was interrupted among the *Egyptians*, this does not hinder but we may have derived some of our Ceremonies from them ; for those that we have always practis'd, and which we still retain, were observ'd in *Egypt* long before.

before *Herodotus* ; and the Time when they were instituted is not known ; nor is it likely that we can now be certain of what could not be known above two thousand Years ago.

There are several Facts of which no Trace can be found in History, and such as lie for ever bury'd in Oblivion. One may well be surpris'd to find in the Books which are transmitted to us, not the least Hint of some of the most considerable Events that have happen'd. Is it not amazing, that no Historian, *Egyptian*, *Greek*, or *Roman*, has made mention of the Drowning of *Pharaoh* ; and that they do but barely mention our Departure out of *Egypt*, and that with the utmost Contempt, in such a manner, that they not only say nothing of passing the *Red Sea*, but dare even to affirm, That our Ancestors were a parcel of Lepers, that were driven out of the Country, as a nasty infected People ? The *Egyptians* Hatred for our Nation may possibly have led those Historians into this Mistake : But I think it surprising, that in the Annals of *Egypt*, and in the Histories of this Nation, there is no mention of that Event which was the Destruction of *Pharaoh* and all his Host. How is it possible to imagine, that *Greece*, *Ethiopia*, *Thrace*, and the other Empires bordering upon *Egypt*, could be ignorant of such a Fact as that ? And supposing it true that the *Egyptians* should, out of Pride, chuse to conceal it from Posterity, What Reason could other People have to pass it over in Silence ? Mean time we have no room to doubt of *Pharaoh's* Punishment : Our sacred Books determine our Belief in this Point ; and since they have declar'd it, we have nothing to do but to assent to it.

We must own therefore, dear *Monceca*, that History leaves us often very much confounded in the most material Points, and that it is not capable of giving

giving us Light ; the Books that treat of the *Egyptians* speak of them as of a People so antient, that they only give a vague and slight Account of what their Priests said of their antient Governments. But how can one give Credit to the Tales and Fables of those Priests, who affirm'd, and obstinately maintained, the Truth and Reality of their Dynasties, which they carry'd above seventeen thousand Years backwards ; another plain Contradiction both to our Books and our Writings ? Certain it is, that *Egypt* is one of the Countries which we find was the soonest peopled after the Flood, and raised to great Power. *Herodotus* says, That in the Reign of *Amasis*, one of the first Kings of *Egypt*, there were twenty thousand very populous Towns ; the Inhabitants thereof cultivated the Sciences. 'Twas this *Amasis* that caused the Temples of *Vulcan* and *Minerva* to be adorned with Colossal Statues, and a House to be placed at the Entrance of the latter, made of one single Stone ; which two thousand Men, belonging to the Sea, were no less than three Years removing thither. This House is twenty Cubits in Front, fourteen in Breadth, and eight in Height †. *Herodotus* speaks of it as one that saw it. Is it possible then, that a People who built such stately Monuments, and who were such Masters of the Arts and Sciences, could totally forget so considerable an Event as the Destruction of *Pharaoh* ? This is a Demonstration to us how many things there are of which History leaves us in the Dark.

Farewell, dear *Monceca* ; live content and happy.

† *Herodotus*, Lib. II.

LETTER



L E T T E R X C V .

*From AARON MONCECA, at Antwerp;
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a
Rabbi at Constantinople.*

A *Ntwerp*, where I have now been for two Days, is the most considerable City in *Brabant*. *London* and *Antwerp* were formerly two Rivals in Commerce; yet they were united with respect to their Interests. These two Cities were of a distinguish'd Rank in the *Teutonic League* or *Hanse*; but now the Port of *Antwerp* is quite bare of Shipping. *Amsterdam* has utterly ruin'd the Trade of this City; which has nothing to shew but some Tokens that it was once a Place of Grandeur. The City is well built; and though the Houses have nothing magnificent, they are very regular, and make a handsome Appearance. The Citadel is beautiful, and well fortify'd *. I have read in a certain *Nazarene* Author †, a very pleasant Passage relating to this Citadel; which shews the natural Simplicity of the *Brabanders*, both in their way of acting, and their manner of explaining themselves.

When this Fort was deliver'd by the *Spaniards*, to the Duke of *Arscot*, in 1577, the Duke, putting his Hand between the Person's Hands who was to receive his Oath, pronounced these Words: I

* It has five Bastions, nam'd *Ferdinand*, *Toledo*, *Duke*, *d'Alva*, *Paciotto*. The last is the Name of the Engineer.
† *Chappuys*.

swear, by the Name of God and holy Mary, that I will faithfully keep this Citadel. After which, the following Answer was returned to him, as part of the Ceremony: *If you do so, God assist you; if not the Devil take your Body and Soul.* And the whole Assembly answer'd, very devoutly, *Amen; so be it.* None but a Native of *Brabant* could have invented such a Form for an Oath of Fidelity; I don't believe it could have enter'd into the Heads of the *Swiss*; for 'tis as course as 'tis comical.

The People of *Antwerp* are as superstitious as those of *Brussels*, and as simple; and the Manners of both Cities are exactly alike. 'Tis true, that the Nobility of *Antwerp* don't trace their Genealogies so far back as *Adam*, like those of *Brussels*; and that they own frankly their Descent from some rich Merchants: But, bating this, they are as much infatuated with their new Nobility, as the others are with the antient kind.

We see very few *Excellencies* at *Antwerp*, the Persons of Condition having no other Appellation than plain *Monsieur*; tho' when they go to *Brussels*, to put themselves in the Fashion, and to cut a grand Figure, I don't know whether they don't make their Servants give them the Title of *Excellency*; for the Generality of the *Flemish* Gentry could never yet obtain that Title but from such Persons as are their Dependants. The Common-people call them also by this vain-glorious Title; but they have been so wise hitherto, as not to expose themselves so far to Ridicule as to bestow that of *Excellency* upon one another in Conversation. However, I fancy that they will carry the Jest to this pitch at last; which, if they do, the Word will grow as common and as frequent in their Conversations, as *Monsieur*.

Tho' Wit and Sprightliness of Genius are not the Endowments of the People of *Antwerp*; yet this City has produced very great Painters. *Rubens*, *Vandyke*, *Otho Venius*, have bred several famous Scholars; and are not inferior to the *Raphaels* and the *Titians*. *Vandyke* especially has distinguish'd himself from the other *Flemings*, and deserves the Appellation of *Rubens refin'd*; for to the Beauty of that Painter's Colourings, he has added a much more accurate Correction of the Designs. *Vandyke* was the only *Flemish* Designer whose Works have not the Complexion of the Genius of his Country, and of the Air of the Climate. The Designs of *Rubens*, *Otho Venius*, and all their Pupils, are very often in the heavy, stupid Stile. Notwithstanding a thousand Beauties which sparkle in their Pictures, they always discover a certain *Flemish* Taste; which is dull, gross, and far from the light Touch of the *Italians*, those faithful Copiers of the Beauties of Antiquity. The Women painted by *Raphael*, *Corregio*, and *Carlo Maratti*, have something divine. The very Nymphs, in their Works, resemble Goddesses; but commonly in those of the *Flemings*, the Goddesses resemble coarse Chambermaids.

In the *Luxemburg* Palace at *Paris*, I saw the famous Gallery painted by *Rubens*. The very Blood seems to circulate in the Figures drawn upon Cloth by that skilful Painter. Nature itself has no Colourings more perfect; nay, there is something more delicate in the Contours or Out-lines; and it may be said, that *Rubens* would have been the top Man of his Art, if he had been born in *Italy*. Tho' he resided there a long time, he could not intirely get quit of the first Ideas which he had contracted in his own Country; and, in his finest Pieces, he always drew some *Flemish* Figure. True it is, that he made
amends,

amends for this Failing by so many other Beauties, that it would be unjust not to pardon him.

This great Man form'd several Pupils; and, for a good while, *Flanders* could boast of many able Painters. But actually there's nothing now left of the famous Schools of *Vandyke* and *Rubens*, but some Pictures in Churches, and in the Closets of the Curious. The Painters dispersed up and down in *Flanders*, at this time, are mere Dawbers, compared to their old Masters. They retain, indeed, somewhat of their Colourings; but they are so much out in the other Parts of Painting, their Design is so incorrect, and their Composition so languid, that there's nothing of the *Flemish* School existing now but in the Works of the Dead.

One would think that the Number of Painters and Sculptures should increase every Age, and that the fine Arts, instead of decaying, should be improved; but the Scholars are so far from out-doing their Masters, that they fall short of them every Day. It has happen'd to the *Flemings*, with regard to *Rubens* and *Vandyke*, as it did to the *Italians*, with regard to *Raphael*, *Titian*, the two *Carraccio's*, *Corregio*, *Julio Romain*, &c. Excepting thirty or forty Years after the Death of those great Men, who liv'd much about the same time, *Italy* could scarce boast, in any Age, of more than one or two Painters that merited the Esteem of all the Connoisseurs. It had, a hundred Years ago, *Guido*, and *Carlo Maratti*, whose Names will live to Posterity; but *Trevisani* and *Soliman* are now the only Persons who, in their Art, have attained to that Degree of Perfection which insures Immortality. *Trevisani* is charming; he designs correctly, but he has something faint and pale in his Colourings; which is the common Failing of the *Roman* School. It seems, dear *Isaac*, as
if

if particular Talents are assign'd to certain Countries, which the Natives of another can never acquire to the same Degree of Perfection.

When Painting was in its most flourishing State, there were three Schools of Renown; the *Flemish*, which excelled in Colouring; the *Roman*, in Design; and the *Venetian*, which aimed to excel in both. *Titian* and *Tintoret* surpassed the *Flemings* in their Designs, and the *Romans* in Colourings: But nevertheless, if they united the Talents of the two other Schools, they surpass'd or equal'd them only in those Parts wherein those Schools least excelled. A Picture of *Titian*, well colour'd and well design'd, is not so well design'd as another of *Raphael*, and inferior in Colouring to a Piece of *Rubens*. I think therefore, dear *Isaac*, that I am not mistaken when I assert, that *certain Talents are peculiar to certain Countries*; and that the first Impressions which the Mind receives when it begins to apply itself to the Arts and Sciences, cannot be intirely effaced after all the Care taken to eradicate the worst Part of them, and to perfect the rest. The Case is the same with respect to the first Steps in Study, as with the first Prejudices imbib'd in Childhood about Religion. A Person can never be wholly divested of them: And I am sure, that when a *Nazarene* turns *Mussulman*, and a *Jew* turns *Nazarene*, a thousand Reflections often recur in their Minds, which 'tis not in their Power to banish.

The greatest Men always retain something of their first Taste, and of that of their Country, or the School in which they were educated. That's what the Painters call *Manner*; and what Study and Travels into foreign Countries cannot drive out of their Heads. *Rubens* was in *Italy* a long while; and many other *Flemings* have work'd at *Rome*. They have really refin'd their *Manner*, and purify'd their Taste;

but

but they still favour of the first Impressions; and all the Care or Pains in the World can never make a *Flemish* Painter as good a Designer as an *Italian*. Nay, Love itself, which sometimes makes Scholars of mere Novices, could never work such a Miracle; tho' of a Locksmith it may make an excellent Painter. Of this I have seen a singular Instance at *Antwerp*. About thirty Paces from the Cathedral I was shew'd a Well, whose Windlass of Iron, to which hangs a Pully, is adorn'd with Foliage: 'Tis the Work of a Locksmith, one *Quintin Mathys*, who fell in Love with a Painter's Daughter; but tho' he was a Fellow of good Sense, and a clever Workman at his calling, he could not obtain his Mistress; her Father being resolv'd not to have a Locksmith for his Son-in-law. Love made *Quintin* abandon the Anvil and Hammer for the Pencil and the Pallet; and the Desire to please guiding his Hand, he soon became an able Workman, and distinguish'd himself so well in his new Art, that he excelled all the Painters of *Antwerp*, and had the good Fortune to marry his Mistress. I have seen this kind of Epitaph against the Walls of the great Church, over the Tomb where this Painter of a Locksmith was bury'd:

Connubialis Amor de Mulcibre fecit Apellem.

i. e.

The almighty Power of conjugal Love made an excellent Painter of a mere Blacksmith.

This is all, dear *Isaac*, that I have yet seen remarkable in this City. Tho' it lies very near to *Holland*, the *Romish* is the only Religion that is tolerated there; but our Fathers could never settle there, and we are only suffer'd there *en passant*. There's no Inquisition in *Brabant* nor *Flanders*; yet the People there are as much devoted to the Friars as

in

in *Spain* and *Italy*. The Nobles are as much Slaves to them as the Commonalty; and they would think it an Illustration to their antient Nobility, to persecute any that differ'd from them in Opinion. This puts me in mind of the Duke of *Montpensier*; who caused all the reform'd *Nazarenes* that fell into his Hands, to be hang'd, and their handsome Women to be ravish'd *; and all this for the greater Glory of God. And what possess'd him with this diabolical Opinion, was nothing but his Descent from a King, whom the *Nazarenes* look upon as a Saint. This honest Monarch went to persecute the *Mahometans*, even to the Centre of *Africa*; and there he died, after having put the Affairs of his Kingdom into very great Confusion by a Zeal so furious and mistaken.

Very ridiculous, dear *Isaac*, is the Blindness of those who think to merit the Esteem of Mankind by destroying their Fellow-creatures, that have been guilty of no Crime, and given them no Occasion of Complaint! Of all Follies, or rather, of all Furies, the most pernicious is that which possesses some Persons of Quality with a Notion, that Men of their Rank ought, by all manner of ways, to maintain and propagate a Religion which their Fathers profess'd.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and live content and happy.

* *Brantome's Memoirs, Tom. III.*





L E T T E R XCVI.

From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, and now at Cairo, tho' formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA, at Antwerp.

Dear MONCECA,

I Have not yet given thee an Account of the famous Pyramids of *Egypt*, which were erected by the antient Kings of this Country, to serve for their Tombs. Some ignorant People, and others that were learned, but prejudiced, treat of these stately Monuments as if they were only so many Piles of Stones heap'd one upon another without much Art. But when 'tis consider'd that the darling Passion of the antient *Egyptians* was to have stately Tombs erected in their Life-time, where their Bodies might rest secure from that Corruption to which all the Dead are subject, and from the Curiosity and Avarice of all Mankind, one shall not wonder that Kings so powerful as those of *Egypt* were, caused these perpetual Monuments to be built to procure themselves that Repose which they desired to enjoy after their Death.

The Names of the Monarchs by whose Order such magnificent Tombs were erected, are not known. Among them they reckon one *Psammeticus*, tho' there is no Reason to support that Opinion, which can render it probable. Some have pretended that *Mercury* caused the three Pyramids to be built;
and

and others, that the most considerable of all was built by that *Pharaoh* the Persecutor of our Nation, who was drown'd in the *Réd-Sea*. They think to prove their Opinion by the Gap in the Pyramid, which they say was never closed ; but in this they are grossly mistaken : For if we examine it with ever so little Attention, 'tis plain that it has been open'd, and even with a great deal of Labour and Pains.

Some antient Authors say, that one of those antient Monuments was built by a famous Courtezan, called *Doricha* ; tho' others gave her the Name of *Rhodope*. *Herodotus* pretends, that the Lady who built this Pyramid out of the Profits she made by the Favours of her Gallants, was the Daughter of one *Cheopes*, a King of *Egypt*, who intirely ruin'd himself by the Expence of erecting the others. Mean time this seems absolutely fabulous ; and I could not give the least Credit to it, tho' this Author affirms he had the Fact from the *Egyptians* themselves. What he says of it is this : ' The prodigious Expence which that Building requir'd, was the Reason that *Cheopes*, who wanted Money, abandon'd himself to that Degree of Ignominy, as to prostitute his own Daughter at a certain House for the sake of Gain. This Daughter not only perform'd her Father's Command, but thought also of a Method to leave some Monument that might render her famous to succeeding Ages. With this View she desired every one of her Visitors to give her a Stone to erect a Building which she had design'd. And I have been told, that of those Stones was built that Pyramid, which is the middlemost of the three, opposite to the great one, and which is one hundred and fifty Foot in Front every way *'.

* *Herodotus's History, Book I. p. 152.*

I can't imagine, dear *Monceca*, how *Herodotus* could determine himself to tell so improbable a Story with so much Gravity ; for tho' he only committed to Writing a Thing that others had told him, he ought to have mention'd it as a vulgar Tale, and to have refuted it as soon as he had related it. How is it likely that a Beauty which was so common as to be able to amass the Quantity of Stones necessary for the Foundation and Basis of the Pyramid, should always remain charming enough to find Lovers so fond as to defray the Expences of this stately Building ? At first Sight one would think a Stone was no great matter ; and that the Favours of a fine Lady could not be obtain'd upon cheaper Terms : But if it be consider'd, that this Stone was to be of Marble Granate, and that the Quarry from which it was to be fetch'd, was near two hundred Leagues off ; it must be confess'd, that they who furnish'd the last Stones would pay very dear for the Favours of a very common Beauty. The antient *Egyptians* were not delicate, perhaps in the Affair of Love ; but it cannot be deny'd that they were generous to Excess.

These Pyramids were formerly in all Appearance, faced with Marble ; but it is plain they are not so now : And their Sovereigns who had occasion for Marble, chose rather to strip those Monuments of it, than to be obliged to send very far for it.

The *Arabian* Authors give a pleasant Account of the Origin of the Pyramids : They affirm that they were built long before the Flood by a Nation of Giants, each of whom carried from the Quarries to the Place where the Pyramids are, a Stone of twenty or twenty-five Foot long, with as much Ease as a Man carries a Book under his Arm † ; and con-

† *Mallet's Account of Egypt*, Part I. p. 104.

frequently it must have been less Trouble to build a Pyramid, than for a Child to build a Castle with Cards ; but an unlucky Accident happen'd to one of those Giants. In one of my former Letters to thee I mention'd that famous Pillar of *Pompey*, the largest and the tallest in the World. The Giant who carry'd it under his Arm, and who, to give himself Ease, chang'd it from under one Arm to the other, broke one of his Ribs in the Action for want of due Care in his Motion : However, this did not hinder him from performing his Journey ; for he arriv'd with his Packet under his Arm, and had his Rib set to rights by a skillful Surgeon.

Take one Story with another, dear *Monceca* ; I like that of *Herodotus* much better than that of the *Arabians*. I could wish that Men would treat one another with a little more Respect, and that the Historians would not so undervalue the human Race as to think it capable of giving Credit to such ridiculous Romances. The Generality of Writers seem to abuse their Privilege of transmitting certain Facts to Posterity. They disguise them, they accommodate them to their own Humour, and leave to future Generations a chimerical Collection of their own Ideas, rather than a true Account of what has pass'd. All Nations have a great Number of Historians, intollerable Compilers of Fables. The *Turks* have the Expounders of their Laws ; the *Jews* their Rabbies ; and the *Nazarenes* their Monks. Whoever has a mind to study History, cannot be too careful in the Choice of the Authors that he takes for his Guide. The first Prejudices that are conceived in historical Matters, are as difficult to be eradicated as those in Questions relating to Philosophy. There is the same Prepossession for an Historian as for a Philosopher ; and 'tis as vicious an Extreme to give an implicit Faith to *Hero-*

dotus, as blindly to adopt all the Sentiments of *Aristotle*. It requires Judgment and Discernment to improve by the Reading of the best Authors ; for there are no Books but what in some Passages favour of human Frailty, which one should endeavour to find out, and to supply the Defect by the Opinion of such as oppose them in that Instance.

I am now reading those Volumes which thou sent'st me from *Paris* ; and am making the best Use I can of those wise Precautions. The *Marseilles* Merchant, who was the Bearer of thy Letters, acquainted me in his, of an Adventure that happen'd some time ago in his Country, which I thought perfectly entertaining, and therefore I send it to thee in his own Words.

L E T T E R.

‘ *S I R,*

‘ **Y**OU won't be angry, perhaps, if I acquaint
 ‘ you with a very comical Accident that hap-
 ‘ pen'd in a famous Procession that was made here
 ‘ some Days ago. The Monks had a mind to build
 ‘ an Altar in the Street, to repose the Shrines on,
 ‘ which were carry'd through the Town. They
 ‘ therefore raised a kind of Dome, supported by
 ‘ Pillars of Wood, cover'd with Branches of Trees,
 ‘ like an Arbour ; under which was form'd a Grotto
 ‘ hung with Leaves ; and in this they were to place
 ‘ the Image of St. *Mary Magdalen*. That it might
 ‘ have as near a Resemblance as possible with the
 ‘ Original, they undress'd a young Virgin of Fifteen,
 ‘ and put her in a Posture which they thought the
 ‘ most proper to represent the expiring Saint. She
 ‘ was laid on a Bed of Turf, cover'd with nothing
 ‘ but Hair ; which was so artfully order'd, that few
 ‘ Parts

‘ Parts of her Body were left naked and expos’d to
 ‘ Sight. This young Creature was thus undress’d,
 ‘ because they pretended in *Provence*, that *St. Mag-*
 ‘ *dalen* had no other Vestment or Covering but her
 ‘ Hair in the Cave of *St. Bawm*; and this animated
 ‘ Statue was order’d to stir as little as possible. The
 ‘ Procession march’d in order along by the Altar;
 ‘ and the Bishop having commanded the Relics of this
 ‘ Saint to be rested on it for some Moments, the
 ‘ Statue, forgetting the Task that was injoin’d her,
 ‘ and being touch’d with a fit of Devotion, fell on
 ‘ her Knees in her Grotto; upon which, the Locks
 ‘ of Hair that she was cover’d with fell off, and
 ‘ the fair Damsel remaining in the pure State of
 ‘ Nature, offer’d to the Sight of the Spectators such
 ‘ lively Beauties as were nothing like those of a dy-
 ‘ ing Person. The Bishop, a truly pious Prelate,
 ‘ was very much scandaliz’d at the Impertinence and
 ‘ Folly of the Monks; and to punish them for the
 ‘ Performance of so senseless a Project, has inter-
 ‘ dicted them. And he seems to be so enrag’d, that
 ‘ it will be a long time, perhaps, before he restores
 ‘ the Powers of Administring, which he has taken
 ‘ away from them.’

I know not, dear *Monceca*, what thou wilt think
 of this Adventure, which I own made me very
 merry. I plainly see the Folly of the Monks in an
 Action so ridiculous.

The *Coptic* Priests in this Country do something
 like it every Year, to the Honour of one of their
 Patriarchs whom they revere as a Saint. A Man
 quite naked appears on a Tomb, and there delivers
 a Discourse in praise of the Deceas’d. All the Suc-
 cessors of this *Coptic* Pontiff hold him in great Ve-
 neration; and say, that his Manners were as pure

as those of the Angels. Certain it is, that the Patriarchs who are chosen in these Days, have scarce any Resemblance with this Saint. They abuse the Religion of which they are the Depositories, make Sale of the Permissions which they grant, and deny none for Money : So that there is nothing which a *Coptic* Priest may not authorise, by virtue of his Credit with the People. Divorces are very common with the *Coptes*. When a Man is discontented with his Wife, or when a Woman complains that she does not like her Husband, the Patriarch separates them without searching into the Cause of the Disagreement, or endeavouring to reconcile them, for fear of losing the Fees which he gets by such Separations ; a Part of the Revenues of this Pontiff arising from the Misunderstandings betwixt Men and their Wives.

The *European* Priests would certainly be much richer than they are, if they enjoy'd such a Prerogative : What Treasures would roll into their Coffers ! and what Marriages would be broke, if the *Nazarenes* were possess'd of that Power ! I imagine, that if the sovereign Pontiff had a mind to renew the antient Croisades, he need only grant a Licence to the Adventurers to throw off the Wedding-Garment, and he might have a more numerous Army than that which *Xerxes* conducted against the *Greeks*. In my Opinion, 'tis the only Method now left for carrying on such unsuccessful and ruinous Wars as the *Nazarene* Princes formerly made in those Climates. Yet in the Time of those Croisades, the *Europeans* ran in Crowds, and abandon'd their own Country, to be knock'd on the Head in another, which it was impossible for them to keep : Nay, so mad were they for undertaking these Voyages, that the very Women took the Cross on them for those
Holy

Holy Wars, and chose to bear a Part in the Fatigues. There was a Number of Ladies of the first Rank at *Genoa* that buckled on the military Harness, and resolv'd to depart for *Egypt*, having a Monk at their Head for their Officer, the very Man who rais'd this charming Recruit. The *Roman* Pontiff, wrote a very long Letter to them upon this Head, which began thus: ' To his noble and
' dear Daughters in Christ, the noble Ladies *Car-*
' *mendini, Ghisulsi, Grimaldi, &c.* We have heard
' by your Letters, as well as by others address'd to
' us, from our most dear Son, *Philip* of *Savona*,
' Lecturer of the Order of Friars Minors, that
' you and many other *Genoese* Women, inspir'd by
' God, have resolv'd to go to the *Holy Land, &c.*'
What think'st thou, dear *Monceca*, of such a Squadron as this of the *Genoese* Women? Was not their Part very edifying?

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.



L E T T E R XCVII.

From ISAAC ONIS, at Cairo, to AARON MONCECA, at Antwerp.

OF all the antient philosophical Doctrines, dear *Monceca*, that which has been most despis'd in *Europe* of late was most adher'd to by the Antients, and is so still by the *Indians*. The Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, or the Transmigration of Souls, which *Pythagoras* taught, was adopted and received by several great Genius's. *Plato* main-

maintain'd it. *Ovid* * and *Virgil*, † in many Places of their Works, declar'd themselves in its Favour. And the *Siamese* Philosophers and the *Brachmans* are convinc'd of it.

It

* *Mente Deos adiit, et quæ Natura negabat
Visibus humanis, Oculis ea Pectoris hausit.*

i. e. *Ovid. Metam. lib. xv.*

“ He, tho' from Heav'n remote, to Heaven could move,
“ With Strength of Mind, and tread th' Abyss above ;
“ And penetrate with his interior Light,
“ Those upper Depths which Nature hid from Sight.

Translated by Mr. Dryden.

To this Elogium of *Pythagoras* must be added that of his System, where he fortifies the Mind against the Fear of Death.

O ! Genus attonitum gelidæ Formidine Mortis,
Quid Styga, quid Tenebræ, et Numina vana timetis,
Materiem Vatum, falsique Piacula Mundi ?
Corpora, sive Rogus Flammâ, seu Tabe Vetustas
Abstulerit, Mala posse pati non ulla putetis.

i. e. *Ovid. Metam. lib. xv.*

“ Why thus affrighted at an empty Name,
“ A Dream of Darkness, and fictitious Flame ?
“ Vain Themes of Wit, which but in Poems pass,
“ And Fables of a World that never was !
“ What feels the Body when the Soul expires,
“ By Time corrupted, or consum'd by Fires ?

† O Pater ! Anne aliquas ad Cœlum hinc ire putandum est
Sublimes Animas ? Iterumque ad tarda reverti
Corpora ? Quæ Lucis miseris tam dira Cupido ?
Dicam equidem ; nec te suspensum, Nate, tenebo ;
Suscipit *Anchises*, atque Ordine singula pandit.
Principio Cœlum ac Terras, camposque liquentes,
Læcentemque Globum Lunæ, Titaniaque Astra,
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per Artus
Mens agitat Molem, et magno se Corpore miscet.
Inde Hominum Pecudumque Genus, Vitæque Volantum,
Et

It seems surprising at first Sight, that so false a System should have such a Currency, and find Adherents for so many Centuries, whilst the other erroneous Opinions of the antient Philosophers fell into Oblivion or Contempt. But when one carefully inquires into the Sentiments of *Pythagoras*, and strips them of all the Absurdities with which they are charg'd by those who have confuted them, 'tis not so great a Wonder that they have continued. The Error of the Persons who have adhered to them is to be lamented ; but as 'twas owing to deceitful Delusions, capable of seducing those of the best Sense, their Failing is to be excus'd.

The

Et quæ marmoreo fert Monstra sub Æquore Pontus.
 Igneus est ollis Vigor, et cœlestis Origo
 Seminibus : quantum non noxia Corpora tardant
 Terrenique hebetant Artus, moribundaque Membra.
 Hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque, neque auras
 Despiciunt clausæ Tenebris, et Carcere cæco.
 Quin et supremo cum Lumine Vita reliquit ;
 Non tamen omne Malum miseris, nec funditus omnes
 Corporeæ excedunt Pestes.

Donec longa Dies, perfecto temporis Orbe,
 Concretam exemit Labem, parumque reliquit
 Æthereum Sensum, atque Auræ simplicis Ignem.
 Has omnes, ubi mille Rotam volvere per Annos,
 Lethæum ad Fluvium Deus evocat Agmine magno :
 Scilicet immemores Supera ut convexa revisant,
 Rursus et incipiant in Corpora velle reverti.

i. e. *Virg. Æneid. lib. vi.*

“ O Father ! can it be that Souls sublime
 “ Return to visit our Terrestrial Clime !
 “ And that the gen'rous Mind releas'd by Death
 “ Can covet lazy Limbs, and mortal Breath ?
 “ *Anchises* then in Order thus begun
 “ To clear those Wonders to his godlike Son :

The Arguments that have determin'd certain Philosophers to believe the *Metempsychosis* are so difficult to be confuted, that the *Nazarene* Doctors who have attempted it, have only added new Weight to them. A Man must not only be a good, but an excellent *Metaphysician*, intirely to defeat the System of *Pythagoras*. This Work, reserv'd for the *Des Cartes's*, the *Lockes*, and the *Bayles*, is above the Capacity of the Schoolmen. A *Jesuit* has shew'd us the Arguments which he and his Brethren make use of to convince the *Indians* of the Errors of the *Metempsychosis*; but they are so weak, and so easy to be confuted, that those People must be very silly, or very ignorant of the Principles of *Nazarenism*, if they don't demolish them Root and Branch. Not to mention a Summary of *Pythagoras's* System, I will only shew thee, dear *Moncsca*, that of the *Indians*, after which I will answer the Objection of the *Jesuits*; and I hope to prove to thee that I was not mistaken, when I said they are far from being unanswerable.

The

“ Know first that Heav'n and Earth's compacted Frame,
 “ And flowing Waters and the starry Flame,
 “ And both the radiant Lights, one common Soul
 “ Inspires and feeds and animates the whole.
 “ This active Mind, infus'd thro' all the Space,
 “ Unites and mingles with the mighty Mass.
 “ Hence Men and Beasts the Breath of Life obtain,
 “ And Birds of Air and Monsters of the Main :
 “ Th' ethereal Vigour is in all the same,
 “ And every Soul is fill'd with equal Flame :
 “ As much as earthy Limbs, and gross Allay
 “ Of mortal Members subject to Decay,
 “ Blunt not the Beams of Heav'n, and Edge of Day.
 “ From this coarse Mixture of terrestrial Parts
 “ Desire and Fear, by Turns, possess their Hearts.

“ And

The *Brachmans* lay it down for the first Principle that all good Actions ought to be rewarded by the Deity, and that all bad ones ought by the Deity to be punish'd. 'The Wisdom of God, *say they*, requires this Order. His Justice demands absolutely that he should punish Wickedness, and reward Virtue. By Consequence no innocent Man can be punish'd, no guilty one be rewarded. Now, how comes it then that it happens every Day, that a Man without deserving it is oppress'd with Misfortunes, from the Day of his Birth to that of his Death? Why do we see others enjoy Happiness without Interruption? It must surely be, that by some Actions previous to their Birth, those who are unhappy deserv'd their Misfortunes, and the Happy deserv'd their good Fortunes.' Thus therefore is the Necessity of the *Metempsychosis* evidently prov'd.

I will add something, dear *Monceca*, to the *Indian* Philosopher's Argument. The Divinity cannot be

" And Grief and Joy; nor can the groveling Mind,
 " In the dark Dungeon of the Limbs confin'd,
 " Assert the native Skies, or own its heav'nly Kind.
 " Nor Death itself can wholly wash their Stains,
 " But long-contracted Filth ev'n in the Soul remains.
 " Then are they happy, when by Length of Time
 " The Scurf is worn away of each committed Crime.
 " No Speck is left of their habitual Stains;
 " But the pure Ether of the Soul remains.
 " But when a thousand rolling Years are past,
 " (So long their Punishments and Penance last)
 " Whole Doves of Minds are by the driving God
 " Compell'd to drink the deep *Lethean* Flood;
 " In large forgetful Draughts to steep the Cares
 " Of their past Labours, and their irksome Years;
 " That unremembring of its former Pain,
 " The Soul may suffer mortal Flesh again."

the Author of Evil; for 'tis directly opposite to the Effence of a Being sovereignly good, and sovereignly perfect. God could not be the Source of any Misfortune attending an Infant not yet stain'd with any Crime. You are under a Necessity therefore of admitting two first Principles, one good which dispenses Happiness, and the other bad which diffuses its Venom upon the Creatures, or you must confess the *Metempsychosis*.

The *Jesuit*, in Answer to this Argument, could not have recourse to the Transgression of *Adam*. For the *Indian* may very justly say to him: ' Your Argument is only a Begging of the Question. You found your Proofs upon such as I don't admit of. I deny that there was an *Adam* form'd by the Divinity *. The Circulation of Souls is eternal; it ever was, and ever will be.'

Those with whom 'tis disputed cannot urge the Fall of the first Man, as the Cause of the Happiness and Misery of Mankind, without admitting our sacred Books to be authentic. Now, the Moment that an *Indian* agrees that what is written in *Genesis* was reveal'd by the Divinity, he must be convinc'd of the Error of the *Metempsychosis*. But when he denies the Authority of this Book, it would be ridiculous to offer to make use of it, to prove the Causes of Moral Good and Evil to him.

* Some learned *Indians* pretend that there are three Things which are eternal, *viz.* the supreme God, Souls, and Generations; which they express by these three Words *Padi, Pachou, Pajum*; and that by going back from the Son to the Father, from the Father to the Grandfather, from the Grandfather to the Great-Grandfather, and so on, it will be impossible to find a Beginning. See *Father Bouchet's Letter on the Metempsychosis, in the Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Idolators, tome ii. p. 181.*

'Tis extremely difficult, dear *Monceca*, to convince a learned *Indian* by Arguments that shew him the true Causes of human Misfortunes, while he ascribes them to the Faults committed by Souls in the Course of a former Life. The Arguments which the *Nazarene* Missionaries make use of are pitiful: 'I demand of the Idolators, *says a Jesuit* †, 'whether all the Beings that are in the World 'ought to be alike? Ought there to be nothing 'but Suns and Stars? Is it not requisite for the 'Well-being of the Universe, that all the Parts 'which compose it should be subordinate to one 'another, and that all its Beings should have a different Situation? In this they are agreed. You 'must own then, say I, that the Case is the same 'with the Moral World; that all cannot be Kings; 'and that, for the sake of good Order there must 'be a Subordination.' In Reply to these general Arguments, an *Indian* may say, 'I grant that 'good Order demands there should be a Subordination in the different States of the World, tho' I 'might deny it with good Reason, if I had not a Mind 'to shorten the Dispute. For, as God could have 'made all Men equally happy, if he had pleas'd, 'good Order might have subsisted, tho' there had 'been an Equality betwixt them, since God had 'need to have done nothing more for this End than 'to create them all virtuous. Then Laws, Princes, 'Magistrates and Judges, would have been insignificant; and, by Consequence, Subordination would 'have been of Use no longer. But 'tis a more 'substantial Evil than this, which I exclaim against. 'Your Comparifon of the Sun and Stars with happy and unhappy Mortals, is not just. Tho' the 'Moon is less than the Sun, yet 'tis not unfortu-

† Ditto, p. 181. at the End.

‘ nate; ’tis not sensible of the Pains of the Gout and
 ‘ Gravel; ’tis not tormented by Hunger and Thirst;
 ‘ it does not fear the Loss of Sight or Hearing; ’tis
 ‘ insensible; all the Splendor of the Sun does not
 ‘ give it the least Trouble, nor the least Sense of Pain:
 ‘ But ’tis not so with Mankind. Their Misfortunes
 ‘ are real. The Haughtiness and Cruelty of a So-
 ‘ vereign, the Dishonesty of Judges, Distempers,
 ‘ Plagues oppress them. If they had not deserv’d
 ‘ those Misfortunes in a former Life, the Order
 ‘ which the Divinity has establish’d in the Moral
 ‘ World would be as bad, as that which it has esta-
 ‘ blish’d in the Planets is worthy of Admiration.
 ‘ To assert that God has not the Power of hindering
 ‘ Evil, is not so contrary to Reason, nor so impious,
 ‘ as to believe him the Author of it §.’

I shall go on dear *Monceca*, with the Examination
 of the *Jesuit’s* Arguments. ‘ The Doctrine of the
 ‘ *Indians*, says he *, furnishes us with a Demonstra-
 ‘ tion to which they have no Reply. The principal
 ‘ Reason why they admit of a *Metempsychosis* is the
 ‘ Necessity of atoning for the Sins of the past Life.
 ‘ Now, according to their System nothing is more
 ‘ easy than Atonement for Sins: All their Books
 ‘ are full of the special Favours which accrue from
 ‘ the Pronunciation of these three Names, *Chiva*,

§ Μυρία γὰρ ἢ ἐπιεικτέρον ἀσθενεία καὶ ἀδυναμία τῶν
 Διὸς ἐκβιάζομενα τὰ μέρη, πολλὰ ἔσαν αὐτοῖα παρὰ τῆς
 ἐκείνης φύσιν καὶ βύλησιν, ἢ μὴτε ἀκρασίαν, μὴτε ἀνομίαν,
 ἢ ἢ ἐστὶν ὁ Ζεὺς αἰτιῶν. Tolerabilius enim erat infinitas
 Partes dicere *Jovi* ob ejus Imbecillitatem Vi facta agere
 multa improbe contra ipsius Naturam et Voluntatem,
 quam nullam esse Libidinem, nullum Scelus, quod non
Jovi auctori imputandum esset. *Plut. advers. Stoicos*,
 p. 1076. E.

* Father *Bouchet’s* Letter, &c.

‘ *Rama, Harigara.* The very first Time that they
 ‘ are pronounc’d all Sins are cancell’d; and if they
 ‘ are pronounc’d three times, the Gods whom they
 ‘ thereby honour are at a Loss to find a Reward that
 ‘ can be adequate to the Merit of the Action. Then
 ‘ the Souls, being gorg’d as it were with Merits,
 ‘ are no longer oblig’d to animate new Bodies, but
 ‘ go directly to *Devenderen’s* Palace of Glory. There
 ‘ is scarce an *Indian* that has any Devotion at all but
 ‘ pronounces these Names above thirty times a Day.
 ‘ Some pronounce them a thousand times, and thus
 ‘ compel the Gods to confess that they are not able
 ‘ to pay. Moreover, Sins are cancell’d with the
 ‘ same Ease, by bathing in certain Rivers and
 ‘ Ponds, by giving Charity to the *Brachmans*, by
 ‘ making Pilgrimages, by reading the *Ramagenam*,
 ‘ by celebrating Festivals to the Honour of the Gods,
 ‘ &c. This being so, there is no Person in the *Indies*
 ‘ but goes out of this World laden with Merits,
 ‘ and without the least Stain of Sin. Now, if there
 ‘ be no longer any Sins to expiate, what can be the
 ‘ Service of a *Metempsychosis*?

If the *Indians*, dear *Monceca*, are puzzled to answer the Objections of the *Jesuits*, they must be void of common Sense, or else they must know nothing at all of the Doctrines of the *Nazarene* Faith. I will, for once put myself in the Place of a *Brachman*; and I say to the Missionary, ‘ Dear *European*,
 ‘ I perceive that the People of your Country blow
 ‘ hot and cold, and that they alternately adopt and
 ‘ reject certain Customs, according as they are
 ‘ favourable to the Opinions which they endeavour
 ‘ to prove. You condemn our Custom of pronouncing the Names *Chiva, Rama, Harigara*. You
 ‘ say, that because they remit Sins all Souls must
 ‘ go to Heaven, and never return again to the
 ‘ Earth. But pray tell me what’s the Use of *Purgatory*,

‘ tory, which you believe, or at least which you say
 ‘ you believe? Your sovereign Pontiffs have found
 ‘ 100000 Expedients by the Name of Indulgences,
 ‘ to exempt the *Nazarenes* from it. Of these, how
 ‘ many different Sorts there are? Some serve for
 ‘ 3000 Years, others for 10000; nay, there are some
 ‘ which clear all Scores, and these are as easy to be
 ‘ had as those which are obtain’d by pronouncing
 ‘ the Words *Chiva, Rama, Harigara*. The Pon-
 ‘ tiffs have even granted Indulgences to the Fashion
 ‘ of bidding Good-morrow*. Every Man who
 ‘ says in *Italy* to the first Person that he meets in
 ‘ the Morning, *Sia laudata Maria*, i. e. *Praised be*
 ‘ *Mary*, gains 1000 Years Indulgences; and he that
 ‘ answers *Amen*, gains 500 Years Indulgences.
 ‘ There is not an *Italian* that has the least Spark ‘of
 ‘ Devotion but what gives 40 Good-morrows in a
 ‘ Morning. This in the Style of Indulgences, is
 ‘ 40000 Years of Pardons, exclusive of 20000 which
 ‘ he gets by answering *Amen* to those who are be-
 ‘ fore-hand with him in pronouncing this happy *Lau-*
 ‘ *data*. Moreover, the Sins of the *Nazarenes* are
 ‘ cancell’d by waving the Arms of the Priests and
 ‘ Friars over the Head, by giving them Presents,
 ‘ by going in Pilgrimage to *Loretto*, by reading the
 ‘ Lives of St. *Ignatius*, St. *Theresa*, and St. *Dominic*.
 ‘ and by celebrating Festivals in honour of the Saints.
 ‘ This being the Case, there’s not one of ‘em but
 ‘ what departs this Life with Merit in abundance,
 ‘ and without the least Stain of Sin. But when there
 ‘ are no more Sins to atone for, of what Service can

* That Foreigners and Travellers may have a Share in
 these Indulgences, there’s not a Cabaret, i. e. *Tavern* or
Victualling House, in *Italy*, but the Bull by which they are
 granted is fix’d up at the Door: And Care has been taken
 to translate it from the *Latin*, and to print it in *Italian*.

‘ Purgatory

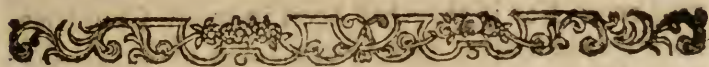
‘ Purgatory be? Explain to me, my dear *European*,
 ‘ what ’tis good for. And when you have demon-
 ‘ strated this to me, I will draw convincing Proofs
 ‘ from it to inforce the Necessity of the *Metempsy-*
 ‘ *chosis*. No doubt you will tell me that Indulgen-
 ‘ ces operate no further than as they are obtain’d
 ‘ by Persons who are in a State of Grace, or are
 ‘ sincerely penitent for all their Sins; and that 500000
 ‘ *Laudata*’s, &c. will not give one Moment’s Ex-
 ‘ emption from Pain to such as have not deserv’d
 ‘ the Effect of the Indulgence. The Case is the
 ‘ same with the Words *Chiava*, *Rama*, *Harigara*.
 ‘ They are of no Service farther than as they are
 ‘ pronounc’d by Persons, who have a sincere Com-
 ‘ punction for their Faults. But since there are few
 ‘ that are so, the *Metempsychosis* is absolutely ne-
 ‘ cessary. You’ll ask, perhaps, of what Use are
 ‘ those Names, since they are of no Efficacy when
 ‘ they are not pronounc’d by Persons that are truly
 ‘ sorry and penitent for their Faults, and since Re-
 ‘ pentance alone wipes out all Crimes? I will own,
 ‘ that I can’t comprehend of what Use they can be
 ‘ any more than Indulgences; but our Priests assure
 ‘ us of their Power, and why should not we be in
 ‘ the right to believe our Heavenly Guides, since
 ‘ you think it your Duty to give Credit to yours?
 ‘ What Preference ought to be given to the *Lau-*
 ‘ *data*, &c. over *Chiava*, *Rama*, *Harigara*, can
 ‘ only be determin’d by knowing whether there is
 ‘ a greater secret Virtue in the Disposition of the
 ‘ Letters in the first Words than in the latter. As
 ‘ to this Difficulty, I think you have no Reason to
 ‘ give me that is more evident than what you as-
 ‘ sign’d as to the Cause of Mens Unhappiness.
 ‘ Therefore since I am persuaded that the Divine
 ‘ Being could not take Pleasure in making Crea-
 ‘ tures unhappy, and since my natural Reason tells
 me

‘ me this would be contradictory to his Essence,
 ‘ you’ll give me Leave, my dear *European*, to be-
 ‘ lieve that Men are punish’d in this Life, for the
 ‘ Transgressions they committed in a former. You
 ‘ will also have the Goodness to indulge me in the
 ‘ Use of the *Chiava*, *Rama*, *Harigara*, and the
 ‘ washing of Sins in Rivers, for the sake of the pur-
 ‘ gative Gesticulation, and the indulgenced Good-
 ‘ morrows, of which you have my free Consent to
 ‘ remain in the peaceable, and quiet Possession.’

I can’t imagine, dear *Monceca*, what Answer a *Jesuit* can make to an *Indian* that starts these Objections to him. He could have no Expedient left but to have recourse to found Philosophy, to make use of all the Discoveries which the great Men of these later Ages have made concerning the Nature of the Souls of Men, and those of Beasts; and to prove by excellent physical Reasons, that the *Metempsychosis* is repugnant to the Essence of Things; that by Consequence there can be no such thing; that there is but a certain Number of Souls; that therefore it would sometimes happen either that there would be Bodies wanting Souls, or Souls destitute of Bodies; because it is contrary to the Essence and to the Order establish’d in Things, to endeavour to fix the Number of Children that are to be born, since this depends on the Free-will granted to Mankind. This gives a fair Occasion, dear *Monceca*, for enforcing the Axiom of *Mallebranche*; That God acts always by the simplest Methods. But a *Jesuit* had rather argue weakly than be under any Obligation to a *Cartesian* Philosopher, and especially to a *Cartesian* Orator. If *Des Cartes*, or *Locke*, had been Members of the Society, their Writings would have been explain’d at this Day, in the College of *Lewis le Grand*; and if *Bourdaloue* had been a *Benedictin*, even the Lay-brethren of the *Jesuits* would.

would criticise his Sermons with Impudence and Impunity.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Prosperity.



LETTER XCVIII.

From ISAAC ONIS, in Egypt, to AARON MONCECA, in Flanders.

A Voyage I have made up the *Nile*, dear *Monceca*, hinder'd me from answering thy Letters sooner, of which I found several at my Return to *Cairo*, that gave me infinite Pleasure; so that I read them several times over, and the oftener I perus'd them, the more I discover'd in them of Amusement and Instruction. An *Arabian*, with whom I have scrap'd an Acquaintance in this Country, and who was my Fellow-Traveller, has conceiv'd a real Esteem for thee, upon some of thy Letters that I shew'd to him. He agrees, that 'tis impossible to acquire the Wisdom which the Philosophers courted with so much Care, but by a profound Study of the Heart of Man; and of this there's no knowing the secret Recesses, but by examining it under divers Forms.

There's a prodigious Difference between the Sentiments of the *Egyptian*, and those of a *Parisian*. They are both indeed agitated by the principal Passions common to all Mankind; but these assume so many different Forms in their Hearts, and they produce Effects so different, that there's no knowing of Men in the general, by the Idea only of the Manners of a single Nation.

A *Sicilian*.

A *Sicilian* who was never out *Messina*, or a *Mahometan* that never stirr'd out of *Constantinople*, fancy Adultery to be a horrible Crime, and a thing to which the Mind of Man could never incline voluntarily. Consequently they are ignorant to what Lengths the Caprice and strange Fancies of Men will run: For if they had been in many Countries, they would know, that by the Laws of several Nations Women are common.

'Tis not only in our Time that we find whole Nations living after the manner of Beasts, and having to do with one another, without Distinction §. 'The *Aufes*, says Herodotus †, have no Women in particular, but they associate with all indifferently, after the manner of Beasts. The Men assemble together every 3 Months; and when the Children are grown up under their Mothers, to be strong enough to go alone, they are carry'd to this Assembly, and the Men to whom they first address themselves are reputed their Fathers.'

Is not this a fine Proof of Legitimacy? But really as ridiculous as this Custom is, I should prefer it to the barbarous Law of the *Nazarenes*, which proscribes Men from the Moment they draw Breath, and condemns them by the Name of *Bastards*, to perpetual Infamy. Is there any thing so contrary to Nature as the Custom which has introduc'd a Difference between the legitimate and illegitimate Children, as if the one had not a Father as well as the other; and as if both were not capable of having the same Virtues, and of being alike useful to Society?

I think the Laws of the *Mahometans* much more reasonable than those of the *Nazarenes*; for they

§ *Peter de la Valle*, Tome I. p. 140.

† History of *Herodotus*, lib. iv. p. 313.

don't put a Father under a Necessity of rendring his Child unhappy ; and a Son born of a *Circassian* Woman is upon as good a Footing as one whose Mother is a *Turk* or an *Egyptian*.

Laws are only good and just as far as they are conformable to the Law of Nature, from whence they all ought to flow, as from their first Principle. There is not a more able Lawyer than that internal Sentiment within us, which the Divine Being has engrav'd in our Hearts, in Characters that are indelible †. Be a Legislator ever so learned, he forfeits my Esteem for him from the Moment that he introduces Customs and Rules contrary to the Maxims of the Law of Nature ; and I look upon his Arguments as those of a subtle Sophist, that tend to obscure the Truth, and to smother Reason.

If, by this Principle, we examine all the Laws that have been made to proscribe certain innocent Creatures from their very Birth, we shall find them not only absurd, but even contrary to Humanity. What ! a Father has a Child, whom he acknowledges to be his own, and that he gave him Birth ; and forsooth, because his Mother did not join in certain Ceremonies to which Men have been pleas'd to give the Name of Marriage, the Son, when grown up, must be look'd upon as infamous ; the Love of his Parents shall be charg'd to him as a capital Crime, and he must not share the Honours of a civil Life ! Tho' it has been endeavour'd to repair this Injustice in Part, by *Legitimation*, yet the very Persons whose Misfortunes they thereby endeavour to diminish, will be deem'd inferior to the Ge-

† *Conscientia*, says *Tertullian*, *poteſt obumbrari, quia non eſt Deus ; extingui non poteſt, quia a Deo eſt* : i. e. Conscience may be obscur'd, because it is not God ; but cannot be quite extinguiſh'd, because it is from God.

nerality of Mankind. Therefore 'tis one of the greatest Mistakes of the human Understanding; I much rather prefer the Custom of the *Auses*, who first of all acknowledge their Children to be the Republic's in general, and then leave it to their Instinct to decide the Choice of their respective Fathers.

If we go back to the primitive Ages, we shall find that the Patriarchs made no manner of Difference between the Children born of their Wives or their Concubines. *Jacob* after having marry'd two Sisters, had Children by two Concubines of their own procuring; yet we don't find that the Patriarch made any Difference between his Children. They were all alike Heads of Tribes; and we that are descended from those Tribes have retain'd the wise Custom of not branding those Children with Infamy that we have by our Mistresses: But the great Acquaintance which we have contracted in some Countries with the *Nazarenes*, has in a manner communicated some of their Prejudices to several of our Brethren.

How different soever be the Opinions of certain People, as to the Condition of Children born of Concubines, we shall find them much more opposite to one another in several other Customs. How would a jealous *Italian* reconcile himself to the Ceremonies us'd at the Marriages of the *Nasamones*, a People of *Libya*? 'The first Night of their Wedding, *says Herodotus*, the Bride goes round to all that were at the Feast to lie with her; and when every one has enjoy'd her, he gives her a Present*.' I don't believe that a jealous *Sicilian* could easily conform to this Ceremony, and that he would chuse to get a very considerable Fortune upon such Terms. Nevertheless this Fashion, which appears so extraordinary to us, is still the Custom, at least

* The History of *Herodotus*, lib. iv. p. 310.

in some measure, among the savage Nations of *America* *; and those very People who seem to have such wild Notions, have several other Customs however, which are worthy of the most civiliz'd and best disciplin'd Republics. The antient *Nasamones*, whom I have been treating of, had so great an Esteem for Virtue, that when they took an Oath, they always laid their Hand upon the Tombs of such as they reckon'd the Men of the greatest Justice and Honour †.

If it be in thy Power, dear *Monceca*, account for this Oddness of Conduct; reconcile, if thou canst, such wise Notions with the Extravagance of making a new marry'd Woman lie with all the Men that were at her Wedding. I am certain, dear *Monceca*, that after thou hast duly reflected on such extraordinary Behaviour, thou wilt confess that 'tis impossible to know to what Point Men may carry their Errors and their Prejudices; and that 'tis absolutely necessary for a Man who would have a just Idea of their Tempers, and strange Inclinations, to travel to the most distant Countries, and study Mankind in the Manners and Customs of the most differing Nations. By this means one attains to the Knowledge of what all the Reflections in the World cannot teach a Person that never went abroad. 'Tis true, that a Scholar who keeps close to his Study, and takes care to inform himself, has the Assistance of Books that were written by Travellers: But nevertheless, he can't by all his Reading know so much as he who has seen those Countries of which he gives the Description. I look upon a Man of Learning, who is acquainted with the Manners of People by his Travels, in the same Light as I do a skilful

* The Voyages of *Peter della Valle*, Tome I. p. 110.

† History of *Herodotus*, lib. iv. p. 310.

Painter that always draws from the Life; whereas he who has no Information but what he gets from Books, is like him that copies after Plates which are often incorrect.

When some Years have been spent in travelling thro' the several Countries, 'tis necessary for a Person who would reap any considerable Benefit from the Things which he has seen, to make Reflections upon certain Particulars which often made less Impression upon us than some others, because we were prepossess'd with them before we travell'd, but do nevertheless point out the Manners and Ways of Thinking of such Nations. So when a *Frenchman* goes to *Constantinople*, he seldom gives much Attention to the Use of the Plurality of Wives. He knew before, when he was in *France*, that the *Turks* had Seraglio's. He will be more curious to inform himself of certain Particulars relating to the Inside of these Seraglio's, and which scarce serve any farther for his Instruction than to make him seriously reflect upon what may have induc'd the *Mahometans* to take several Wives, and to compare their Arguments with those of the *Nazarenes*, who are allow'd but one.

'Tis certain that a Philosopher, who without Prejudice examines the Customs of the *Turks*, and those of the *Nazarenes*, will find those of the former much more agreeable to Reason, as to what relates to the Multiplicity of Wives, and the Divorce of those that they have any Cause to complain of. The *Mahometans* have made a Ceremony of Marriage, which serves to render Man happy three different Ways. They may, according to their Law, have three Wives; the first may serve to bring them Kindred; and as the Women that they marry for the sake of having their Protection, seldom bring Fortunes with 'em, they find in the second the Wealth that was

wanting

wanting in the First. Finally, they may in the Third only gratify their Taste ; and after having taken care of getting Fortunes and Protection, follow the Desires of their own Hearts.

If Marriage is only a Band between two Persons of different Sexes, in order for their living happy, and being useful to Society, three Fourths of the Marriages of the *Nazarenes* are Matches as pernicious to the public Good, as they are chargeable to those that form'd them. When a Woman is barren, she and her Husband become in some Measure useless to the State. By a Law which is absurd and senseless, a Husband is punish'd without having deserv'd it, for the Offences of his Wife. He must not hope to enjoy the comfortable Name of Father whilst she lives. After this, ought we to wonder at the bad Conduct of the *Nazarenes*, and the criminal Excesses of which some of them are guilty ?

If it were allow'd in *France, England, Germany, &c.* for a Man to marry a second Wife when the first is incapable of being a Mother, or to divorce her when her Temper does not suit with his, how many extravagant Debaucheries, and horrid Crimes, might be avoided ? for then two Persons, who perhaps wish one another dead, and cannot bear with each other, would be permitted to seek others with whom they might live more cordially.

The *Nazarenes* not only condemn Divorce, but even Polygamy, as a very great Crime. I can't imagine upon what they found the Custom of having but one Wife, and how they can think the Deity is offended by the Plurality of Wives. 'Tis a Custom which they have deriv'd from the Pagans *, and which they have compell'd us to submit to in the Countries where they are the Masters. For among

* The old *Romans*.

the *Israelites* our Forefathers, the Plurality of Wives was always tolerated as useful, not only to private Persons, but also to the Republic. The *Nazarenes* believe our sacred Books: Why then do they oppose those Customs which they there find authoriz'd by the greatest Men? Did not *Jacob* take two Sisters in Marriage at the same time; and had not he moreover two Concubines? *David* the Royal Prophet, whose sacred Hymns are sung with a loud Voice in all the Temples of the *Nazarenes*, whether Papists or Reformed, made choice of a young Woman in the last Days of his Life that were devoted to Repentance; and the Number of Concubines which his Son *Solomon* had was equal to his Wealth. He was the richest Prince of his Time in Gold and Silver; and in his Palace was the greatest Number of Women. I know, dear *Monceca*, that we don't give into the Superstition of the *Nazarenes*, and that with us, who are strict Observers of the Law of *Moses*, Adultery is the only amorous Pleasure that we are forbid to take; but nevertheless we are forc'd to submit, and we have in a manner adopted the Custom of the *Nazarenes*.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; and live content and happy.





L E T T E R X C I X .

From AARON MONCECA, at Aix la Chapelle, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Cairo, formerly Rabbi at Constantinople.

BEfore I went to *Holland*, I was willing to see *Liege* and *Aix la Chapelle*, two neighbouring Towns in *Brabant*, which I was assur'd were worth a Traveller's Observation ; and I am not sorry that I have spent ten or twelve Days in satisfying my Curiosity.

Liege is a very large and populous City, adorn'd with some fine Buildings, tho' they are not many. The Pontiff is the Sovereign of it, and his Clergy share with him in the Authority. Heretofore this Chapter consisted of the first Noblemen in *Europe* : And there was not a *Canon* (which is a Name that the *Nazarenes* give to certain Priests) but what was of some eminent Family. When that sovereign Pontiff of *Rome*, call'd *Innocent II.* crown'd the Emperor *Lotharius*, the *Canons* that were at that Ceremony were, for the most part, of Royal Extraction. There were among them nine Sons of Kings, fourteen Sons of Dukes who were sovereign Princes, twenty-nine Counts of the Holy Empire, and eight Barons. All those Lords and Princes are now metamorphos'd into mean Burghers ; and as soon as a Man is dubbed a Doctor of the University of *Louvain*, he may be admitted a Canon of

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Liege,

Liege, and a Member of its sovereign Council. 'Tis true that he has only the Prerogative of commanding the wickedest People in the Universe ; the *Neapolitan* Populace being very reserv'd, and very regular, with regard to that of *Liege*. They both deserve alike to be the Neighbours of Mount *Vesuvius* ; and some Earthquakes would do as much good to the *Liegeois* as to the *Neapolitans* : For be the former ever so wicked, yet they pretend they have a Number of Protectors in the Deities Presence, who, in Consideration of so many Pounds of Incense and Wax *per Ann.* easily procure them the Pardon of their Crimes. These Protectors come sometimes to visit them, and to shew them what Mines of Coal there are in the Earth. One of the Saints who had the Care of the Affairs of the *Liegeois* in Charge at the Court of Heaven, enter'd the City upon a certain Day, in the Habit of a Pilgrim ; and after he had beckon'd to one of the Burghers to follow him, and discover'd a Mine to him, he vanish'd. He thereby did great Service to the *Liegeois* ; for since the Discovery of those Mines, a great many Armourers have settled in the Country, where they carry on a very considerable Trade. The Coal extracted from these Mines is called *Houille*, from a certain Farrier, called *Prudhomme le Houilloux* ; to whom the Guardian Saint of the *Liegeois* address'd himself. But as to the Burghers and Nobles here, they are as valuable as the Vulgar are despisable ; for they are polite, and ready to do good Offices. The Manners of the one are quite different from those of the other : So that when I speak to thee of the *Liegeois*, I mean the People in general.

The Inhabitants of *Aix la Chapelle*, from whence I now write to thee, are much more civil and courteous. This is a large City, and still very beauti-

beautiful ; tho' it has lost part of its Lustre by several Fires, by which it was twice or thrice almost intirely destroy'd. After it had been demolish'd and sack'd by *Attila*, 'twas rebuilt by *Charlemagne*, who declar'd it the Capital of *Gallia Transalpina*, and chose it for the Place of his ordinary Residence. He caused the great Church to be built, in which he lies-interr'd ; and his Tomb is still to be seen there. I have been positively assured by some *Nazarenes*, that at the time of the Dedication of this Church, two Pontiffs, who had been a long time in their Graves, took the Trouble of rising again, to be Witnesses of this august Ceremony. They set out from Heaven betimes in the Morning, arriv'd about nine of the Clock at *Aix la Chapelle*, assisted at the Divine Service, dined with all the Prelates whom *Charlemagne* had invited that Day to a sumptuous Feast ; and set out again about four of the Clock in the Afternoon for Heaven ; where they arriv'd just at shutting the Gate. This is travelling to some Purpose !

These Things ought not to astonish thee, dear *Isaac* ; for the *Nazarenes* give out Stories that are yet more absurd. They say, That in a certain Chest, which is preserv'd in the Church of *Aix la Chapelle*, they have the very Manna that fell from Heaven into the Desert, for the Nourishment of the *Israelites* ; and the Leaves and Blossoms of *Aaron's* Rod, which flourish'd miraculously in the Tabernacle. If any one of our Rabbies had wrote, that such Relics are kept in a certain Synagogue of the *Levant*, how many Banters should not we have been subject to, and what Lashes should we not have felt from a Posse of *Nazarene* Doctors ? What have they not said, and perhaps with Reason too, concerning many things that there are in the *Talmud* ? Tho' I don't believe there is any thing ex-

traordinary in that Work, which the sensible Part of the *Jews* swallow without certain Restrictions, and without giving it some Explanations which excuse the Text in Places where it seems to be faulty.

The Manna in the Desert, and *Aaron's Buds*, are not the only remarkable Things that are shewn in this Country. There's a surprizing Quantity of little Splinters of Bones, Locks of Hair, and Shreds of Stuffs, in Cases of Gold and Silver ; which are held in such Veneration, that some of them are sent from hence to do Honour to the Coronation of the Emperors. The Magistrate of the City carries these venerable Scraps, in Ceremony, from one End of *Germany* to the other, together with the Sword and Belt of *Charlemagne* ; which is not one of the most inconsiderable Relics of this Place. The Emperors were formerly crown'd at *Aix la Chapelle* ; and most of *Charlemagne's* Successors chose also to be crown'd here. At length *Charles IV* absolutely settled this Affair by one of the Constitutions of the *Golden Bull* ; wherein it was ordain'd, That the Emperors should be first crown'd here ; but 'tis not so now. And the only Ceremony which is still kept up is, that some Person is deputed to the Magistrates, to give them Advice of an approaching Election, to the end that they may send the Imperial Ornaments and Relics that I have mention'd to thee. After this, the Emperor, in whatsoever Place he be crown'd, declares, That particular Reasons hinder'd him from repairing to *Aix la Chapelle* ; and that he does not thereby propose to infringe the Prerogative of this City, or to deprive it of its Privileges. This done, the Emperor is styled a *Canon* of *Aix*, and is sworn as such on the Day of his Coronation. Then the Magistrate carries back the Belt, the Sword, and all the miraculous Tackle ; which is every bit of it replac'd in the Vestry of
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the Church ; where the Curious may not see it without Money ; And tho' honest *Charlemagne* has been now dead above nine hundred Years ; yet his Bones and his Garments have still the Power of exacting a Fee from the Purfes of all Strangers.

I wonder that, among fo many sacred Relics of Antiquity, they have not the Club of that honest Pontiff *Turpin*, fo well known in the antient Chronicles of *Charlemagne*. The Head of that excellent Nag of his Nephew *Roland*, might alfo have gracefully had a Place there, tho' it was not endued with the Talent of the Fairies, like to *Renaud's* ; for *Ariosto* and *Boyardo* have fhifted him into fo many different Hands, that it would have been too difficult to have made the Piece appear to be genuine and real ; whereas honest *Roland* loft his Horfe but once, and found it as luckily again, as *Sancho Pancha* did his Afs. This fame *Roland* was very fortunate in finding what he had loft ; for his Cousin *Aftolphus* brought him back his good Sense, which was carefully preserv'd in a Bottle in Paradise, and deliver'd to him by St. *John*, with his own Hands, If the good Sense of every *Nazarene*, whose Brains are evaporated, were to be bottled up in Paradise, all the Glafs-houfes in the World would not be fufficient to furnifh the celeftial Mansion with Cafes to hold it. And none but a fupreme Power can operate fo great a Miracle.

Tho' *Aix la Chapelle* is a great Gainer by the Concourse of *Nazarene* Votaries that come to fee its Relics ; yet its hot Baths, which are reckon'd good for the moft desperate Difcafes, are Treafures to this City which are much more confiderable ; for a Multitude of Valetudinarians flock to them every Year from the four Parts of the World, in hopes of finding thefe Pools as efficacious almoft as that of the famous Temple, which

will never be restor'd till our Deliverer comes upon Earth.

The Inhabitants of this City are courteous and polite, but very superstitious : They formerly permitted the Reformed *Nazarenes* the free Exercise of their Religion ; but they have now intirely suppress'd it. It was not done without the shedding of much Blood ; but at length the Papists overpower'd their Adversaries, and are now the sole Masters of the City, its Offices and Churches. I should have been glad to have stay'd here a few Days longer ; but my Affairs require me in *Holland* ; so that I cannot be the Spectator of what would be a charming Sight for a Philosopher : 'Tis a famous Procession, wherein a Colossal Figure is carry'd, to which they give the Name of *Charlemagne*. 'Tis accompany'd with many other Extravagancies ; and all the Apparatus of this Festival is directed by Folly.

As to these Processions made by the *Nazarenes*, while I was at *Paris*, the Chevalier *de Maisin* told me the Particulars of one of those pious Perambulations of which he was an Eye-witness, in a Tour that he made to *Provence*. He told me, that at *Aix*, the Capital of that Country, he saw a Procession which was begun by a Company of Chair-men, or Peasants dress'd in a long black Gown, encompassed with little Bells, having their Heads covered with a sort of Paste-board-Head-pieces representing the Figure of a Devil with long Horns. They carry a Fork with which they hold up the Train of a She-devil, who walks in the Centre of them, with a Comb in one Hand, and a Looking-glass in the other. The infernal Lady, being extremely modest, and not caring to have her Petticoats turn'd up, guards against it in such a Manner as excites both the Admiration and the Mirth of the Populace. After these Devils, follow a Number

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ber of such Masqueraders, the Subjects of which are borrow'd from our sacred Books. For Instance: There's a *Moses*, who carries the Tables of the Law; and a Rabble of *Israelites*, worshipping the golden Calf. One of these Masqueraders lets off a Pistol, at which all the idolatrous *Jews* fall down as dead; and as they who act these Parts have nothing on but their Shirts and Masks, they throw themselves into the Mud in the midst of the Kennels; and the more they expose of their naked Backsides, the more do they excite Laughter and Curiosity.

Among these Representations, which the Inhabitants of *Provence* call *Sacred Games*, there's a strapping Porter dress'd like a Woman, who represents the Queen of *Sheba* going to visit *Solomon*. They affect to give this Princess a very large Rump; and her Merit depends on the Dimension of her Bum.

Immediately behind her broad A—se, comes an *Italian*, to whom they give the Name of Duke *Urban*, attended by all his Court, consisting of a Number of Peasants in the Apparel of both Sexes. This last Masquerade would be the most antic of all, if the Monks did not follow it, who walk two a-brest, and are most of them dressed even more ridiculously than the Masks that go before them. The Procession is clos'd by the Shrines and Busts of the canoniz'd *Nazarenes*, which are attended by the Parliament, whose Presence gives such Fooleries a Sanction.

I was loth to believe what the Chevalier *de Maisur* told me; for the Natives of *Provence* don't want a Genius nor Penetration; and there cannot be greater Delusion than to tolerate such ridiculous Actions, so contrary to Good-sense, and so likely to prejudice a judicious Man against all that favour them. *State Policy*, said the Chevalier to me, *keeps up all these ridiculous Customs. The City where this Pro-*

cession is made, gets above 100,000 Crowns in three Days time, by the great Number of Foreigners who come to see this Festival, and purchase and consume a great Quantity of Provision. Avarice not only keeps up a great many superstitious Customs but even multiplies the Number of them every Day.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers grant thee Prosperity in abundance.



LETTER C.

From JACOB BRITO, at Barcelona, to
AARON MONCECA, in Holland.

I AM at length arriv'd, dear *Monceca*, in that Country where so many of our Brethren have been inhumanly slaughter'd and sacrific'd to the Avarice of the Monks upon the Pretence of Religion. I have cross'd through *Roussillon*, and a Part of *Catalonia*, and I now write to thee from *Barcelona*, which is a large, fine and well-fortified City: But 'tis a very sorry Harbour; so that 'tis not safe for Ships to be there in bad Weather. The *Catalans* mortally hate the *Castilians*, and had rather live under any Government than that of *Spain*, as they have demonstrated by their several Rebellions; but they are at length reduc'd to such a Degree that they have nothing left but the Liberty of forming groundless Hopes. The Citadel, which has been lately built, is such a formidable Curb, that *Barcelona* is not in a Condition for any Undertaking, and has nothing to trust to but its Obedience and Submission.

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The Burghers, in all the Towns of *Catalonia*, are disarm'd; and as for the Peasants, they are watch'd still more closely, Troops being always quarter'd up and down the Villages. Such Precautions indeed are a great Expence and Trouble to the Court of *Spain*, but there's a Necessity for it; and to do Justice to the *Castilians*, they had not acted with such Severity till things were drove to the last Extremity.

In the last Siege of this City the very Monks were at the Head of the Rebels, and actually mounted Guard, reliev'd the Soldiers in the most dangerous Posts, and animated them by their Speeches and Actions: They even gave their Relics an Airing upon the Ramparts; and a Cannon Ball or two carry'd off both a Monk and his Saint. The Nuns too, tho' the weaker Sex, chose to have a Hand in the Rebellion; and hung out Standards, made of red Cloth, at their Windows, to shew that they too breath'd nothing but Blood and Slaughter.

Consider, dear *Monceca*, how furious a Rebellion grows when once the People take it into their Heads to revolt; it gives Courage to the weakest of them: And it seems, that the more heinous is the Crime, the greater is their Valour. Rebellious Subjects often fight with more Obstinacy to destroy their Prince, than loyal ones do to defend and guard him from their Attacks: Not that the *Castilians* can be reproached for having acted faintly in favour of *Philip V.* This Monarch is oblig'd to love them in a twofold Sense; both as his Subjects, and as his Children: And they always look upon him both as a good King, and as a Father. But in spite of all their Efforts, this good Will of theirs would not have been enough, if *France* had not put an End to the Rebellion of the *Catalans*.

The Women in this Country have greater Liberties than in the rest of *Spain*; tho' they are not so

free by far as they are in *France*. They have, by degrees, shook off the old *Spanish* Mode. The *Duegnas* (or peevish old Governesses) the *Jalousies* (or Veils of Crape) are no longer subsisting; or at least, what remains of all that Equipage of Jealousy, is nothing more than a Ceremonial of very little Use for the Security of the Husbands. The great Number of *French* and *Flemings* settled at *Barcelona*, with the great Bodies of Troops that form the Garrison, and are for most part *Walloons*, have, by little and little, accustom'd the old Inhabitants of the Country to bear Cuckoldom with Patience: Not but that there are still a great many of the *Catalans*, who kick and wince at the very Thoughts of wearing Horns; but the more Care they take to avoid them, the sooner they are often intangled in the Misfortune.

Gallantry is become an Epidemic Distemper at *Barcelona*; to which Place the *French* were the Importers of it: And unfortunate are they who feel the Stings of it, notwithstanding all their Precaution.

Altho' Love has as ample Prerogatives in *Spain* as in *France*, yet its Methods of acting here are very different; and tho' the End is the same, yet the ways of attaining to it are quite contrary. In *France* a Lover declares himself openly: He follows his Mistress to the Ball, to the Play; and Parties that are made for the Country, and Merry-makings, are fine Opportunities for an amorous *Frenchman*. A *Spaniard* is discreet and reserv'd, being forced to conceal the Sentiments of his Heart from the Public. His Happiness, and the Success of his Intrigues, depend on Secrecy. The Churches are the most favourable Places for him; so that every Saint's Day serves his Purpose as well as an Opera or a Comedy. A Mother accompanies her Daughter, a Husband his Wife,

Wife, to the Play-houses; but the Women go by themselves to the Temples; and under the Cloak of Piety, Love finds a Loop-hole to make it amends for its Constraint.

All the first Assignations in *Spain* are made in the Churches, and there they strike the final Bargains; which are perform'd at the Houses of Women that pass for Saints, whither young People may go without any Censure. There are few *Spanish* Ladies but have some venerable She-friend, cover'd with *Scapularies* and *Agnus Dei's*. A Husband would be look'd upon as a Fool, or which is worse, as a Heretic, if it should enter his Head, that *Donna Mendoza*, or *Donna Valcabro*, who are both venerable for their Age, and for the Rank which they have held for above twenty Years in the most sacred Confraternity of St. *Francis*, should be capable of being Procureesses, or of promoting a Meeting of Lovers! These Ladies of the holy Fraternity are here look'd upon as Persons already beatify'd. They maintain a great Correspondence with certain Friars, called *Cordeliers*, who direct them, and are their Associates. The *Nazarenos* call these holy Unions by the Name of *Spiritual Kindred*. From thence come all those Phrases and Forms of Speech that we read in the Mystic Books, and which seem unintelligible; such are these: ‘ I adore you from my Heart, dear Sister, ‘ as a Deity. You are always present to my Mind, ‘ tho’ I speak and act with other Persons.—Pray ‘ for your Brother, for your Friend, for your ‘ Servant *.’

Some of these Expressions are extracted from the Books of one *Francis de Sales*, and from the Letters he wrote to *de Chantal*, a Nun. This *Francis de*

* This last Phrase is taken from Father *Girard's* Letters to *la Cadiere*.

Sales was, 'tis affirm'd, a civil sort of a Man; who had as many Crotchets in his Head as *Fontenelle*. All the Monks have been glad of this Pretext for boldly writing the most passionate Sentiments to their Votaries, under the Veil of a mystic Language. The *Spanish* Friars don't indeed use so much Ceremony; they have a fair Field open to them, and are welcome to enter what Houses they please. As under the Shelter of their Cowl they enjoy all manner of Privileges; so they are more insolent, more ignorant, and more debauch'd, than in any other Kingdom. If the Children were to come into the World with any Token that plainly pointed out their Fathers, half of the *Spaniards* would find theirs among the Clergy and Friars.

The Clergy in this Country are not very regular in their manner of Living, wherein they are very different from those of *France*; of whose Regularity thou didst boast to me in thy Letters. That thou mayst form a just Idea, dear *Monceca*, of the Ecclesiastics in this Country, thou must take it for granted, that the Monks are twice as wicked and ignorant as they are in *France*; and that the secular Priests are not much better.

One thing which will surprize thee in a Country where the inferior Clergy are so deprav'd, is, the Gravity, Probity and Candour of the *Spanish* Pontiffs, who are really worthy of their Rank; so that there's not one of them but deserves the Esteem and Approbation of all good Men. Be the Religion what it will, it cannot be deny'd that a Flock would be happy if they improv'd by the Lessons of such sober Pastors. The Pontiffs are the only Persons in *Spain* who are not subject to the Inquisition. I will give thee an Account hereafter of this iniquitous Tribunal, of which I have already learnt many Particulars that strike a Horror. As soon as
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the terrible Name of *Inquisitor* is mention'd in this Country, every body trembles; and the greatest are as much afraid as the meanest Subjects. Notwithstanding my Passports, and the Commission I bear with me from the Republic of *Genoa*, I am forced to be very circumspect, and dare not, as when I was in *France*, speak what I think.

When I was got beyond *Belle-garde*, (the last Place in *France*) I affected a Silence very much resembling the *Pythagorean*. This melancholy Air is agreeable enough in a Country where every body is extremely reserv'd. They say that this Gravity increases, the farther one advances into *Spain*; which if true, I expect, when I come to *Madrid*, to find a City full of *Heraclitus's*, and to see the Inhabitants all in Tears.

Now I speak of Tears, I must tell thee, dear *Monceca*, that I laugh'd very heartily at a Place to which I went to weep. In this City there's a Company of Players newly arriv'd; which I was assur'd is the best that has been seen in *Spain* for a long time. One especially was cry'd up, viz. *la Galliega*, who was the King's Actress, but had left *Madrid* in some Disgust. I was importun'd to go and see a new Tragedy, which they assured me was a very fine and a moving one. Guess how I was surpriz'd, dear *Monceca*, when entering into the Theatre-Room, I saw two Comedians on the Stage, in the Habit of Monks, playing the chief Parts of a Piece, intitled, *The Death of Alexis*; or, *The Example of Chastity*. I must own to thee, this was such an Absurdity as I did by no means expect. I wish'd at that very Instant, that thou couldst have been Eye-witness of such a ridiculous Thing. The Subject of this Tragedy was answerable to the Character and Dignity of the *Dramatis Personæ*. *Alexis*, the principal Personage, is a *Roman Gentleman*,
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very fond of Celibacy; who having left his Wife the very first Night of the Wedding, wander'd a long time from one Town to another, till he came at last and died at the House of his Father, who would not own him; but in Compassion suffer'd him to retire to a sorry lonesome Cottage, where he expir'd. A Billet found in his Hand when he is dead, discovers the whole Mystery; but the Paper can't be taken from him; for, dead as he is, he does not care to deliver it to any but the sovereign Pontiff, who comes with his whole Court to receive the Saint's Billet; and the Play ends with a Shout from the Theatre.

Alexis, at the Beginning of the first Act, is but eighteen Years old, and in the fifth he is from forty to forty-five. The Rules of Unity of Place and Action are as perfectly kept up as that of the twenty-four Hours. The Thoughts and Sentiments were of a piece with all the rest; so that I don't think any Composition can be more wild and ridiculous: Not but the *Spaniards* have several good Dramatic Pieces. Don *Lopez de Vega* has wrote very excellent Comedies; but the People have very little Relish for them. They had rather see *St. Jago* or *St. Philip*, than *Agamemnon* or *Achilles*; and the Prints in the Flesh of *St. Francis* extort more Tears, than the Complaints of *Andromache*, and the Despair of *Hermione*. Such are the Taste and Prejudices of this Country. Nothing will go down any-where but Devotion, or rather Superstition.

When the Comedy was playing, I heard a Bell tinkle; upon which all the Company fell on their Knees, and mutter'd something. The Comedians led the Way, and two Authors that were upon the Stage, interrupted one another; though they did but just stir their Lips, and spoke as low as the other Spectators. This Ceremony being over, every
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body stood up again, and the Play was continu'd. I ask'd what they meant by moving their Lips, and was told, That this was call'd an *Angelus*. This is a sort of Prayer which I could not have thought the *Nazarenes* would have made at the Play-house. None but *Spaniards* could have chose such a Place as that to say their Prayers in. True it is that this Place ought, in all Appearance, to enjoy the same Prerogatives as the Monasteries; for they that take the Money at the Door are Priests, who, under the Denomination of being poor, share the Profits with the Comedians. Indeed, the Companies of Comedians, in Consideration of this Diminution of their Revenue, enjoy all the Privileges of the other *Nazarenes*. They are not excommunicated like those in *France*; and if they were rich enough, and devout enough, they might have a Chaplain like the Royal Regiments.

When the Comedians die in *Spain*, they are allow'd Burial, which is deny'd them in *France*; whereas in *England* they have Mausoleums erected to their Honour. From whence, dear *Monceca*, do such Whimsies proceed, but from antient Prejudices, much more than Reason? which if it has any Share in the Interment of Stage-Players, I am sure it condemns the Extravagance of the *French*, and that of the *English* too; and that it must approve of the just Medium of the *Spaniards*. It would be well for the latter if they were as much guided by Good-sense in all the Actions of their Lives.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Prosperity.



L E T T E R C I.

From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam, to JACOB BRITO, in Spain.

I Am at length arriv'd in a Country, dear *Brito*, where Mankind is as free as they are Slaves in the Country which thou inhabitest: *Holland*, says a *French* Author, seems to be the Country of Philosophers, who being free of that Yoke which is impos'd upon Reason elsewhere, may make use of it when they please. Good-sense seems to be intail'd upon the *Dutch*; and whoever examines them carefully, will readily own, That though Nature has denied them the Politeness of the *French*, the Penetration of the *English*, and the Vivacity of the *Italians*, she has amply rewarded them for the want of those Qualities, by Good-sense, Candour, and a great Forecast, which conducts them in all their Actions.

The *Dutch*, being born free, only obey the Laws of their Country, and have no Sovereigns but Virtue and their Duties. Thou must not fancy however that this Character fits all the Natives of *Holland*, for in this Country, as in all others, there are both good and bad, and the Common-people in *Holland* are as despiseable, as the Burghers, and even the honest Artificers, are commendable.

It would be impossible for me, dear *Brito*, to give thee a just Idea of the Manners of this Country, without entring into Particulars. Thou must
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be already sensible, that when I characterise the Common-people, I don't inform thee of any thing that is peculiar to the Burghers, and the chief Men of the Republic. The Nobility that are still remaining in the Country, have Manners and Customs that are very different also from those of the Burghers. Therefore I shall endeavour to shew thee whatever I think worthy of Remark in the several States of this Republic.

Holland is an unpleasant Country, it being Land floating in the Sea, and consisting of Meadows, which, for three Quarters of the Year, are laid under Water: And were it as fruitful in Corn as it is barren, 'tis so narrow and close a Country, that it could not feed one fifth Part of its Inhabitants.

All that the *Dutch* have to depend on, is their Commerce, which they have spar'd no Pains nor Expence to advance in their own Country, and to extend to the extreme Parts of the World.

'Twas a meer Necessity, and the Oppression of the *Spaniards*, that forced the Inhabitants of this Country to go to the *Indies*, and form a second Republic there. When they had shaken off the Yoke of their former Master, *Spain* was resolv'd to forbid them from trading to its Ports, thinking by that means to weaken them, and to pave the way for their Reduction. In Process of Time these Difficulties made the *Dutch* resolve to go themselves to the very Fountain of Commerce. They sail'd to the *Indies*, and there they laid the Foundation of those superb Colonies which were afterwards form'd there. An *Italian* Author, who cannot be reckon'd a very great Friend of *Holland*, or much inclin'd to proclaim its Grandeur, affirms, That the City of *Amsterdam* alone

alone had more Shipping than all *Europe* put together *.

But it was not without Difficulty that the *Dutch* establish'd their Commerce in the *East Indies*; for the *Portuguese*, then the Subjects of *Spain*, threaten'd them upon all Occasions, and left no Stone unturn'd to make them miscarry in their Undertaking: But they surmounted all these Difficulties; they conquer'd their Enemies, and drove them from several of the Islands of which they were the Masters. These Victories, and these happy Beginnings, encourag'd their Hopes, and they then began to think of extending their Commerce to the *West Indies*.

The Liberty which the *Dutch* enjoy, was of very great Service to them in their Undertakings. The intire Security which Foreigners meet with in their Country, the Asylum which has been granted there in all Times since the Establishment of the Republic, to those that have been persecuted in other Countries for the sake of their Religion, have drawn such Numbers of People to them, that they have been able to form powerful Colonies, to fit out a prodigious Number of Ships, and at the same time to find their own Country extremely populous.

If *Spain* had continued to be the Mistress of *Holland*, *Amsterdam* would now perhaps have been like *Antwerp*. It would have been great only in Extent, and remarkable only for its Situation: Whereas now every thing in this stately City has the Face of the antient Grandeur of the *Tyrians* and *Phoenicians*, of which the *Greeks* and *Romans* have left such pompous Descriptions. Amongst the most

* La Quantita di Vascelli, à commun Judicio, viene stimata sì grande, che pareggia quella che fa tuto il reste dell' *Europa* insieme. *Bentivoglio*.

remarkable things that I ever saw in all my Travels, I never met with any thing that so much surpriz'd me as the Port of *Amsterdam*. 'Tis impossible, without having seen it, to conceive what a grand Appearance 2000 Ships, inclos'd in that Harbour, make. Were one to form an Idea of a magnificent City built in the midst of the Waves, it would still come far short of that fine View of a Number of Ships from all the Nations in the World, whose Masts, Flags and Streamers, make such a Shew that there's nothing like it to be seen.

Since I have been at *Amsterdam*, I have only had time as yet to make a general Survey of the Beauties of this City, without being able to examine them in particular; but I will take care to inform thee of every thing that I shall see, and endeavour to give thee an exact Account of it.

There are few Religions but what are profess'd in this City, where People have the Liberty of worshipping the Divine Being after their own way. Yet the Religion of the State, or that of the United Provinces, is the Christian Reform'd Religion, which thou knowest to be in the main the same as the *Nazarene*; and that it only differs from it in some few Articles.

The *Nazarene* Papists publicly damn the Reformed *Nazarenes*, who indeed charitably allow their Adversaries may have some little Place in Heaven; but they make it so hard a matter for them to attain to it, that, to speak frankly, they might as well give them to all the Devils. These two different Religions, or, to speak more properly, these two different Opinions, because in the main they are both agreed as to the greatest Part of Facts, have caus'd a great many Quarrels between their Adherents. There was a Time when the *Nazarenes* cut one another's Throats, and thought to gain Heaven by shedding one

one another's Blood in Defence of the Opinions of a *German Monk* *, and a *French Ecclesiastic* †. These were two learned Men, even by the Confession of their Enemies: I dare affirm also, that when they broach'd their Opinions, they never thought that they would have been attended with such Divisions; and if they were to come into the World now, I very much question whether there would be such War about their Opinions now as then: Were they ever so good, People would be content to believe them, without offering to force them down one another's Throats by the Point of the Sword. The *Nazarenes*, especially the Reform'd, are wiser now than to commit Massacres for Arguments and Syllogisms; and they grant free Liberty of Conscience to all that live in their Country.

The Reformed Religion is indeed that which is the governing Religion of *Holland*, but it does not tyrannize over the others; which however is a Case that might easily happen were it not for the Wisdom of the Government. For 'tis here as elsewhere, and there are many zealous Votaries among the Reform'd, who, in Imitation of the Jesuits, would, for the *greater Glory of God*, torment a *Nazarene* Papist with a great deal of Pleasure and Satisfaction. But the Magistrates are so humane, and so far from being Bigots, that they can't bear the Mention of such Oppressions as would in the Consequence be prejudicial to the State: Therefore the *Nazarene* Papists have so much Reason to commend the Lenity of the Government, that we are assur'd that the Number of the Papists who are settled in this Country surpasses, or at least equals that of the Reformed.

* *Luther.*† *Calvin.*

The just Limits which the Wisdom of the *Dutch* has put to the Ambition of the Clergy, are a farther Security to the Tranquility of all the Religions that are different and separate from that which is uppermost; for it would be not only in vain, but dangerous, for them to endeavour to foment a pious Zeal in their Flocks against such as they call Heretics or Non-conformists. If they should cause the least Disturbance they would be injoin'd to pray to God; and upon their Disobedience, their Pockets would pay for it: For as they have no Revenue but what is granted them by the State, the Moment they fail in their Duty to the State, it withdraws its Allowance, and leaves the said Clergy, with their Wives and Children, to shift for themselves.

In the Reformed Religion the Clergy are marry'd. They thought Good-sense dictated that they should be allow'd to have Wives, for fear they should use the Privilege of the *Nazarene* Monks, and make use of their Neighbours Wives. It must be confess'd therefore, that their Manners in general are worthy of the Purity of the Golden Age. I should not be surpriz'd if I heard that a Minister (by which Name the Reformed call their Priests) had been guilty of a Failing of that sort; for they are but Men, and, as such, liable to human Passions; but hitherto none has been reproach'd with the least Crime that is shocking to Decency.

The Author of *Calvinism* did, I think, very considerable Prejudice to the Clergy that adhered to his Sentiments: He permitted them to take Wives, but clipp'd their Benefices; which may be call'd *burning the Candle at both Ends*.

The *Calvinist Dutch* have no such thing as sovereign Pontiffs, or ordinary Pontiffs, all their Priests being upon an equal Footing. They never had the
tempting

tempting Pleasure of hearing themselves saluted by the Titles of *My Lord*, *Your Grace*, or *Your Eminence*; nor do they fail to give the Name of the Whore of *Babylon* to all the Churches where any of the Clergy are vested with pompous Titles, and enjoy a Revenue of 40,000 Livres; though perhaps they condemn what they would be glad of in their Hearts: And the Article in which they would the soonest shake Hands with their Adversaries, would undoubtedly be that which should permit them to possess great Benefices, and to be honour'd with the Titles of *Lordship* or *Eminence*, as well as the *Nazarene* Pontiffs.

If the Ministers are not rich, they are however learned: They are not admitted till they have been maturely examin'd; whereas, in almost all the Orders, the *Nazarene* Monks are, for the most part, Beggars and Drones. The Clergy among the Reformed are advanc'd to that Station by their Merit and Learning; so that the meanest Pastor is not only instructed in his Religion, but sometimes knows those things that form great Men, of whom the Body of Ministers have furnish'd many. They mortally hate the Jesuits, and the latter hate them as bad; for which I think that Both have Reason. Were it not for the Ministers, all *Europe* would be Papists; were it not for the Jesuits, it would be all Reform'd. Though they are so exasperated one against another, yet I make no doubt but from the Bottom of their Hearts, they do one another Justice, and that they own their Adversaries have both Learning and Merit; at least, the famous *Claude*, and the celebrated *Arnauld*, thought after this manner. I have however met with *Jansenists* in *France*, who assured me very confidently, that the Jesuits were Ignoramus's; and such was their Animosity
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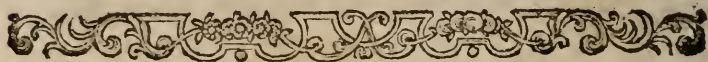
and Blindness, that they would hardly allow them to understand Politics, though it must be confess'd, that they are a learned Body, and that this Order has produced great Men. The Benedictines, of whom there have been many Scholars of the first Rank, love the Jesuits but little better than the Reformed do ; yet they own that their Adversaries have had Authors worthy of the Esteem of the Universe, were they only to name the *Sirmondus's* and *Petavius's*.

In this Dispute between the *Nazarene* Doctors, Papists *Jansenists*, Reform'd, &c. 'tis my Opinion that a Man of Sense ought only to regard what is good in their Writings, without troubling himself what an Author's Opinion was about Grace or Predestination, if there were any Excellencies in other Parts of his Works. What is it to me, dear *Brito*, when I am reading Daniel's *History of France*, whether that Writer was a Jesuit or a Rabbi ? Provided I can reap any Benefit by his Work, I am ready to give it the Praise which it deserves, and at the same time to blame a bad Historian, tho' he were a *Jew*. The Learned, as to the Correspondence of Civil Life, are of all sorts of Religions. 'Tis the last Degree of Folly not to do Justice to the Merit of a Man, because he worships the Deity in a manner different from ours. A Weakness so extravagant as this, is what none but the Monks and Prelates of *Italy* can be guilty of.

There is no Country where People, tho' of a different Religion, live in more Union than in *Holland* : Here *Jews*, *Nazarenes*, and *Mahometans*, treat one another as if they were Brethren. They all look upon themselves as but Men, and as Children of the same God. Happy Country ! where Men have a Tenderness for their Fellow-creatures, and don't demand that they should be Slaves to

an Opinion, which often they can neither believe, nor comprehend !

Farewell, dear *Brito* ; live content and happy ; and let me have the Pleasure of hearing from thee. I am commanded by *Moses Rodrigo* to make his Compliments to thee. He proves of very great Service to me in this Country.



LETTER CII.

From JACOB BRITO, at Madrid, to
AARON MONCECA, in Holland.

I Can't express to thee, dear *Monceca*, how much I am struck with the Manners and Customs of the *Spaniards*, which I think every Day more and more extraordinary ; and for the two Months that I have now been in *Spain*, have had more Cause to make Reflections upon the Pride and Ignorance of Mankind, than I had for a whole Year that I stay'd in *Italy*.

There's hardly a Road in this Country more frequented than that from *Barcelona* to *Madrid* ; yet in several Parts of it a Traveller finds nothing that he wants. Instead of Inns after the *French* or *Italian* manner, he meets with nothing but sorry *Venta's* †, which are great Houses ready to tumble down, with some Bedsteads up in the Garrets. The weary Traveller, when he comes to these delicious Quarters, finds nothing at all to eat ; but must send to the Baker for Bread, and to the Butcher for Meat ;

† Paultry Inns.

and

and if he has no Servant, he is oblig'd to go out himself for his Provision. The Landlord of the *Venta's* would not go out of his Way for a Prince, and would think it a Dishonour to him, if he took one Step more than his Rank oblig'd him to.

Indeed, in Towns of any Note there are none of these *Venta's*; but the Cabarets or Houses of Entertainment there are so detestable, the Accommodations and the Attendance so bad, that they are little better than those charming *Venta's*.

Nothing but mere Necessity can engage a Man to travel in *Spain*; for he must be a Madman if he did it out of pure Curiosity, unless he does it for the sake of picking up Memoirs to furnish a History of the Depravity of the human Understanding: In this case he could not do better, because where-ever he sets his Foot, he would be sure to find Pride, Poverty, low Cunning, Ignorance and Bigotry, Superstition, Vanity and ridiculous Ceremony, which form the Character of the *Spanish* Nation; and tho' many People give out in foreign Countries, that the modern *Spaniards* are not like what they were heretofore, they confound the Foreigners that are settled in *Spain* with the original Natives of the Country. 'Tis true, that in the present Reign, the Court has assum'd a new Face, and that the *Grande'es*, who are every where the Slaves to Ambition, have found their way to Court, by adopting Maxims very different from those by which they were govern'd formerly. But the Populace, the Burghers, and the common sort of Gentry, are still those very *Spaniards*, whose Rhodomantades have often made all *Europe* merry; and whose Poverty and Nastiness sometimes outstrip their Vanity.

Thou canst not imagine, dear *Monceca*, how very haughty the Common-people are here; and upon Holidays thou wouldst be amaz'd to see a Com-

pany of Workmen, who often for want of Bread have fasted all the Week long, strutting in black Silk, with a Sword by their Sides, and accosting one another with very honourable Titles. When a Peasant meets another in the Fields, he salutes him gravely, and says to him emphatically, *Adio, Señor Cavallero*; i. e. *Farewell, Sir Gentleman*: To which polite Compliment the other makes Answer with very great Seriousness; and there's as much Majesty at their Greetings, as if it was at the Interview of two potent Monarchs, on the Frontiers of their respective Dominions.

Heretofore the Common-people were not only proud, but even insolent to their Grandees, and their Sovereigns; but under this Monarch, Affairs look with another Face. He has so humbled the People, that he is in no fear of their Commotions. In the Reign of his Predecessor *Charles II.* the Shoemakers of *Madrid* were so considerable a Body, that whenever they mutiny'd, the Court was oblig'd to grant their Demands. Being inform'd, in 1676, that the Court had regulated the Price of Shoes, it so disgusted them, that they presented a Petition to the President of the Council of *Castile*, wherein they demanded that the Price might be settled as it was before; and finding that he was not so quick as they would have him in Compliance, they all ran with their Lasts and Stirrups under the Windows of *Charles's* Chamber, and cry'd out with all their Might; *Viva el Rei, y muera el mal Gouvierno!* i. e. *God bless the King, but may the wicked Governor perish!* The King, surpris'd at such extraordinary unexpected Music, went to the Windows, and was not a little astonish'd to see the worshipful Company of the Shoemakers of *Madrid*; upon which he sent for the President of *Castile*, who, to put a Stop to so disagreeable a Concert, gave the Mutineers Leave to
sell

sell their Shoes as dear, and to make them of as bad Leather as they pleas'd.

The thing which encourag'd these Shoemakers to be so bold, was the Indulgence which had been shew'd some Days before to the Masons that met in one of the Out-parts of the City, and resolved to enter by Force of Arms into the Houses of some of the Magistrates, who did not govern to their Minds, and whom they accus'd of confounding Affairs, and of laying Schemes for starving the Poor. The Design of these new Reformers was to cut the Throats of those pretended Criminals, in the Face of all the World, to make Examples of them. By good Luck, there was not a Mutineer that had Resolution enough to put himself at the Head of the Conspirators ; and the Affair had no Consequence, every one returning home to his Work, and the Magistrates continued to plunder. The Insurrection of the Shoemakers was owing to the Folly of not punishing the former Rebels. 'Tis true, that in the last Reign the bad Administration was the Cause of frequent Rebellions. The Duke of *Medina-Cæli*, who had the Management of Affairs, was of a very indolent Temper ; so that every one robb'd and plunder'd, and there never was a Penny to be found in the King's Coffers.

The Poverty of the Common-people was partly owing to their Laziness, and indeed to the Idleness of most of the Burghers ; and 'tis this same Sluggishness that even contributes at this Day to the Exportation of a great Quantity of Money out of *Spain* ; and what Riches soever the Flota brings into it every Year, it is not sufficient to remedy the Mischief which the Government suffers from the Sloth, and ridiculous Vanity, of a Part of the Subjects. Moreover, out of the extraordinary Sums that are brought from the *Indies*, near two Thirds must be

ducted, which Foreigners draw back for the Goods by them furnish'd.

The chief Reason why the *Spaniards* have so little Money of their own, is the prodigious Number of *French* and *Flemings* that come hither to serve them, who do Things which the *Don Diego's*, the *Don Sancho's* and the *Don Rodrigo's* would scorn to put their Hands to, and which would be such a Wound to their Vanity, that they would rather by a thousand times chuse to be starv'd with Hunger, than resolve to undertake. The *Flemings* and the *French*, who are not so lazy and so vain as the *Spaniards*, are employ'd in their Tillage, in their Buildings, and in the most servile Drudgery; and when they have scraped a few Pistoles together, they take leave of the *Don Sancho's* and the *Don Diego's*, and carry the Cash home into their own Country, leaving their Masters without a Penny, but with the same Pride and Haughtiness as ever. The Number of these Foreigners that come to work in *Spain*, is so considerable, that a *French* Author says, there are no less than 80000 of them, that are continually coming into and going out of the Kingdom in this manner; and that there is not a Man but carries away every Year seven or eight Pistoles, and sometimes more. 'Tis very plain, dear *Monceca*, that this must amount to a prodigious Sum. 'Tis true that since *Philip* the Fifth came to the Throne, the great Numbers of *French* that have settled in *Spain*, have contributed prodigiously to repeople it, and have very much diminish'd the Circulation of the travelling Domestic and Peasants, by furnishing the *Don Garcia's* and *Don Pedro's* with fixed Servants.

One Reason of the little Care taken in *Spain* to cultivate the Lands, which are for most part fallow, or very much neglected, is the great Number of Monks, with which this Country abounds more than

any other. Here it may be said they are in their Garrison. The Priests for many Years have had the Prerogative, in this Country, of ruining and tormenting to Death all that dare to disoblige them, on Pretence that they are *Jews*, Conjurers, Blasphemers, or that they have been guilty of some other Crimes, cognizable by the Tribunal of the Inquisition. Whoever is so presumptuous as to scruple to bend the Knee before the Monkish Idol, is deliver'd over to the Hands of the Hangman. But I don't design to acquaint thee with the Cruelties of the Inquisition at this time, and shall relate all the Horrors that I have heard of it in another Letter. One thing which surprises me is, that the *Spaniards*, if they had not this barbarous Inquisition, would be every whit as submissive to the Monks, for whom they have a ridiculous Veneration, which seems to be an Idea born with them; and they promote them to all the eminent Posts: 'Tis true that the present Ministry is so wise and clear-sighted as to oppose this Custom very much; but the Evil is so rooted that it is incurable.

The Duke of *Medina-Cæli*, who was Prime Minister to *Charles* the Second, met with no Affair in all his Administration that gave him more Trouble to manage than that of changing the King's Confessor: For no sooner had the Duke promoted one to that Post, but he was obliged to remove him; so that in five Years, that Monarch had no less than seven Confessors, of whom there was not one who did not cabal, and confound Affairs.

The Veneration the *Spaniards* have for the Friars is so great, so blind, that it makes them undertake the Vindication of the most unparallel'd Misdemeanours; they even punish those that offer to stop them; by striking at the Monastic Privileges; and the most exalted Station never proved a Shelter to those that have dared to attempt it.

A Monk of the Kingdom of *Valencia*, which is a Country that abounds with Robbers, Murderers and Assassins, after having quitted his Convent, put himself at the Head of those Banditti, who are called *Bandelero's*, and distinguish'd himself by several wicked Actions; but just as he had committed an Assassination, he was taken with the Weapons upon him. All the Divinity of the School could not furnish him with Arguments to palliate his Crime. Some Person of Good-sense, who thought that it was absolutely necessary to make an Example of him, advis'd the Viceroy to hang up the Friar upon the Spot; which he had a great mind to do, but being afraid of the Monastic Posse, he called a Council of four Friars of the several Orders, and commanded them to give him their Opinion. There were two of them who quoted all the *Spanish* Doctors, and pretended that the Friar could not be tried 'till the Pontiff was acquainted of his Affair. The two other Friars, forgetting as it were by a Miracle, the venerable Habit of St. *Francis*, with which they were cloathed, and struck with Horror at the Murder which their Brother had committed, voted that he should be executed with all possible Speed. In this Conflict of Opinions, the Viceroy thinking that it was for the King's Service to make a speedy and severe Example of him, adhered to that Opinion which he thought most conformable to Justice, and caus'd the Criminal to be executed on the Spot.

The Clergy being informed that a Monk was going to be punish'd, who deserv'd to be broke upon the Wheel, met in a tumultuous manner, and made haste to the Pontiff, who entering into their Opinion, sent to desire the Viceroy to proceed no farther. But the latter thought himself excus'd for this time from paying his filial Obedience; and going roundly to work, the Monk was executed without a Moment's

ment's Delay. But it was scarce over, when the Pontiff publish'd an Interdict, at which melancholy News the People thought themselves undone, took Arms in a Rage, and besieg'd the Viceroy, who was fled to his Palace for Refuge. They said to him: "Gobernador disgraciado! quieres que nos hagamos negros como Carbon, y secos como Lena? Crees que faremos escomulgados por Amor tuyo? Es menester que eres Judio, o Moro, por haver hecho un Pecado por el qual el Ciel te amenaza;" i. e. Unhappy Governor! would'st thou have us become as black as Coal, and as dry as Wood? Do'st thou think that we have a mind to be excommunicated for thy sake? Thou must be either a *Jew* or a *Moor* to have presumed to commit a Crime that subjects thee to the Wrath of Heaven. The Viceroy did not think fit to reason with the Populace that had such strong Arguments on their Sides, but was so wise as to make his Escape out of the Town. The Court, being informed of this Affair, appointed a *Jesuit* and a *Dominican* to enquire into it. Thou already perceivest, dear *Monceca*, that the Viceroy had not Justice done him; for he was severely chastised for having dared to punish a Villain: He was banish'd twenty Leagues from *Madrid*, and another was appointed to enjoy his Place.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy.





L E T T E R CIII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam,
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraite, at Cairo,
formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

Dear ISAAC,

THE Air of *Holland* seems to inspire a Love of Philosophy; that Liberty which is enjoy'd there furnishes the Mind with a thousand Ideas which don't present themselves to it elsewhere. Every Man in this Country has a Right of Thinking, Reasoning, and Explaining himself, without running the risque of his Life or Fortune. Every body may serve God in their own way; and provided they are virtuous, they are sure of being quiet in this Country.

The Freedom of Religion which People enjoy in these Provinces, does not give Occasion to the least Trouble. As there is not one that has a Thought of tyrannizing over the others, all Mankind live in Peace here, and every one follows his own Opinion. For be the Diversity of Sentiments among the *Dutch* ever so great, they all centre in this Point; *Let us not force others, and let us not be forced.*

These happy People are truly humane, and attach'd to the first Principles of the Law of Nature. They don't think that the Difference of Opinions ought to be an Occasion of Violence and Persecution. They leave it to God to enlighten the Mind. They don't
make

make human Nature blush under the specious Colour of Truth and Religion; and the Fondness for extending their Faith does not make them put the less Value upon the Lives of their Brethren. Is a Man the less so, for being a *Persian* or an *Indian*? If he is virtuous, why must he be banish'd from Society? A *Turk*, or, if you will, a *Bonze*, if he be a Man of Candour, is every where an inestimable Treasure; and he ought to be respected by his Fellow-creatures at *Amsterdam*, as well as at *Constantinople*, or at *Pekin*.

These Maxims are so perfectly rivetted in the *Dutch*, that there are few People persecuted for Religion, but are sure of finding not only a Shelter among them, but real Protection. One would imagine, that the Uniformity of their Faith had excited their Charity towards the *French* Refugees. I am apt to think it has a Share in it. But the Hatred which they bear to Violence was the single Motive that determin'd them to assist the *Portuguese* Jews against the Persecution of their Tyrants. The United Provinces have receiv'd our unfortunate proscrib'd Brethren, and protect'd them from the Rage of the Monks. There are Numbers of *Nazarene* Papists that ought eternally to own their Obligations to the Goodness of the *Dutch*, whose tender Compassion has been experienc'd too by many celebrated Authors of the first Rank, who have had the Misfortune to be banish'd their Country.

'Tis not here as in many other Countries, where our unfortunate Nation seems only tolerated to be a Prey to all the Injuries, and to suffer all the Severities of Fortune. A *Jew* at *Amsterdam* is a Subject who enjoys all the Privileges to which the other Religions are intitled; and the Cousin of a *Roman* Pontiff, the Brother of the first *Lutheran* Baron, and the Son of an *English* Bishop, have not greater Prerogatives in

Holland than the Child of the meanest Rabbi. If a Man has the Happiness to be born a Subject of the Republic, he enjoys all Privileges, he owes Submission to nobody, and owns not even the Magistrate, but when he is in his Office ; for at other times they are all upon a Level.

It may therefore, dear *Isaac*, be justly said, that the *Jews* are free in *Holland* and in *England*, but Slaves every where else, either to the *Nazarenes* or to *Mussulmen*. We are tolerated at *Rome*, and indeed have many Synagogues there ; but what a Constraint are we not put under ! What Cruelty, Scorn and Labour, are we not subject to, to purchase the Asylum which is granted us ! I have been assur'd by several of our Brethren, that by an Ordinance of a certain Pontiff of *Rome* †, a particular Number of the *Jews* there were oblig'd to be present every *Saturday* in the Afternoon at a *Nazarene* Sermon, when a Company of Friars walk'd about the Church with long Wands in their Hands ; and if a *Jew* seem'd not to give good Attention, he was reprimanded, and treated like a Scholar sent to learn his Catechism ; for the least Mark of Heedlessness was corrected by two or three Raps over the Shoulders. Sometimes the Monks peep into the Ears of such as are present at these Sermons, for fear they should stop them with Cotton.

For what Purpose is all this Grimace, or rather these Indignities ? Are the *Nazarenes* so senseless as to think that the Mind is convinc'd by vain Declamations ? The Heart can never be brought to relish Reason without finding out some Method to pre-engage it. Tho' it were true, as it is not, that the *Nazarenes* are in the right way, the harsh, violent and tyrannical Manner, with which they declare

† *Gregory XIII.*

their Sentiments to us, would hinder us from embracing them, and prejudice us against a Religion which aims at sovereign Power, and seeks to convince by Force rather than by Reason.

The *Dutch*, my dear *Isaac*, are very far from opening the Ears of their Preachers with Switches. Being content to follow those Opinions which they think the most probable, they trouble themselves as little with their Neighbours Faith as with their domestic Affairs, into which they never inquire.

A Man in this Country is a despotic King at his own House, where he gives Orders like a Sovereign. He is not afraid who inquires or knows what he does; unless only, in case it be suspected that he acts against the Government, or the Welfare of Society.

From that Liberty which all the *Dutch* enjoy to a Man, arises their Love of the Country, which every Individual looks upon as a kind Mother, of whose Privileges he ought to be tender. These Sentiments are so impress'd on their Minds that nothing can efface them; and as there are few, if any, Monks in *Holland*, and as they have no Authority there, the Tranquility of the Republic is like to last for ever. The Difference of Religion is not a Thing to be fear'd in it. The *Dutch* are People of too good Sense ever to disturb the Republic for the sake of defending the Opinion of any Doctors. They permit them to write as many Books as they will, and when they are good either for Instruction or Amusement, they read them; but if they are trifling, they let them rot in Peace with the Booksellers.

The Consequence of the Liberty which the learned Men enjoy of disputing as they please, is a Number of different Creeds or Religions, which are in the main all *Nazarene*, tho' they vary in certain Points. Perhaps, dear *Monceca*, thou wilt not be sorry if I
give

give thee a short History of some of these differing Sects.

One of the most considerable is that of the *Arminians*, which took its Name from *Arminius*, Divinity-Professor at *Leyden*. It only differs from the Religion of the Reformed or *Calvinists*, in the Articles of Grace and Predestination.

The *Anti-Trinitarians* or modern *Arians* have reviv'd the Opinions of that famous *Arius*, who made such a Noise among the *Nazarene* Pontiffs in the Time of *Constantine*. His Sentiments after 200 Years of Triumph, and 1300 of Oblivion, are reviv'd at this Day, and have been maintain'd in our Time by very able Men, especially in *England*. Dr. *Clarke*, a learned *Englishman*, wrote several Tracts to prove the Validity and Truth of this Doctrine; and the celebrated *Newton* is suppos'd to have dy'd an *Arian*. If I was a *Nazarene*, I should be at a Loss to comprehend how 'twas possible that this Truth should not be known to any body for above thirteen Centuries.

One of the most extraordinary Sects is that of the *Quakers*, which has neither Priests, nor Worship. They who are of this Opinion are not baptiz'd like the *Nazarenes*, nor circumciz'd like the *Jews* and the *Turks*. All the Religious Ceremony they have when they meet is to hear a Person preach a Sermon; but the Preacher starts up by chance. The first that has a Notion of being inspir'd, be it Man or Woman, declares what he or she thinks the Spirit dictates, and the Audience is very attentive. The Women are very careful to hide their Faces with their Fans, and the Men are cover'd with broad-brimm'd Hats, which give them an Air extremely serious and gloomy. The *Quakers* are, perhaps, the only true Philosophers of all the *Nazarenes*. They never give any body the Title of *Sir*, much less of
Your

Your Highness, or Your Majesty. They say that all such Words are the Invention of the Pride of Man ; and that 'tis ridiculous to call mere Earth-worms by the Titles of *your Eminence, your Holiness, your Excellency, &c.* And to avoid being guilty of it, they *Thee* and *Thou* even Princes and Kings. All the Reason they give for it is, that a great Man is not two Persons ; and that *Thou* becomes him much better than *You*, which is generally larded with some superb Terms, that he does not deserve. Their Habit is generally very plain, without Plaits or Buttons, to the end that it may be a continual Lesson to them to be more virtuous than other Men, whose unprofitable and criminal Dress they have rejected. They never take Oaths ; for they say 'tis horrid to prostitute the Name of the Most High in the Disputes of wretched Mortals ; and that a Man who has a Mind to be virtuous, ought never to affirm or deny a Thing but by a *Yea* and a *Nay*.

I will confess to thee, dear *Isaac*, that I can never say enough in Praise of this Custom of the *Quakers* ; for Oaths are vain and superfluous, and serve to no Purpose. With Men the Knave is not afraid to take a false Oath, and the Gentleman ought to be believ'd upon his Word. Perhaps thou hast not seen that fine Passage of a Tragic Author of this Century :

—— *Laisse-là les Sermens.*

*S'ils faisoient dans les cœurs naître les Sentimens,
Je t'en demanderois. Mais quelle est leur puissance ?
Le Vice les trahit, la Vertu s'en offense.
Il suffit, entre nous, de ton Devoir, du mien.
Voilà le vrai Serment : Les autres ne sont rien §.*

§ *Houdart de la Motte*, in the Tragedy of *Romulus*,
Act V. Scene I.

i. e.

————— Let's hear no more of Oaths.

If they awaken'd Conscience in the Breast,
I would demand them of thee. But what do they
avail?

Vice betrays them, Virtue frowns at them.

For us, let it suffice to discharge our respective Ob-
ligations.

That's the true Oath; others are good for nought.

The last Virtue of the *Quakers* is never to go to War, and not to shed Blood upon any Pretext whatever. They say, that the Glory of Conquerors is a Fury fit for a Madman. They are griev'd at the Murders which other Men commit, and gild over with the Epithets of *Courage*, *Greatness of Soul*, *Magnanimity*, or *Love of their Country*. They add; that if all Men were *Quakers*, content with possessing what they have, and careful to make the Unfortunate share with them, they would not, like famish'd Wolves, go and tear People to Pieces, whom they never saw, or had any Knowledge of; and, who never perhaps did them any Harm.

The Sect of *Anabaptists*, or rather *Mennonites*, so call'd from a *Friesland* Priest call'd *Menno*, is much the same with that of the *Quakers*, excepting the Shaking which the latter affect when they receive the pretended Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and excepting Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which the *Mennonites* administer to adult Persons, and which the *Quakers* make no use of.

The *Rhinsebourgiens*, so call'd from the Village of *Rhinsebourg* near *Leyden*, where they meet every Year the Day after *Pentecost*, are descended from the *Arminians*; but they have adopted several Opinions of the *Arians*, *Quakers*, *Anabaptists*, &c.

and

and their Religion is a Medley of the Opinions of all the *Nazarene* Sects.

The *Hebraists* are a sort of *Nazarene Jews*, who deem the perfect Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Language as an Article of Faith. In this Sect there's a great Number of Women: And God knows what a concert is form'd by 'the Clacks of these *Hebraists* going all together! They have an Air of Tumult and Wildness which scarce inspires Devotion.

In all these different Religions; dear *Isaac*, there are a few honest Souls full of Probity and Candour, who believe that the most agreeable Worship to the Divine Being is to serve him with Zeal and Fervency. Thinkest thou that they will ever be plung'd in Darkness, because they are not born of the Race of *Jacob*? Will it be of no Service to them to have follow'd the Law of Nature, which was the first that Men practis'd, and the Lights of their own Consciences? When they have acknowledg'd but one God, and done nothing but good to their Neighbour in this World, shall they be everlastingly unhappy in the other? And because they did not believe it was necessary for Salvation to be a *Jew*, can the Divinity resolve to punish Creatures for being virtuous? This however is said by our Rabbies, who affirm that 'tis a Mystery which passeth our Knowledge. But must we absolutely believe 'em?

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; live content; and tho' 'tis thy Happiness to be born a *Jew*, don't rashly condemn others.



L E T T E R - C I V .

From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.

THE Variëty of Sects one observes in *Holland*, has led me into serious Reflections upon the Power of Prejudices. I have attentively consider'd how difficult it is for Men to know the Errors of the Religion in which they are bred, how visible soever they are to such as are born in another Opinion.

The Notion which People conceive in their Youth of what they call Grounds of Faith, is so strong, and has so much the Ascendant over them, that they easily swallow Sentiments directly opposite to one another, and equally ridiculous, without perceiving their astonishing Contrariety. *The Objects*, says Cicero, *which are daily present to our View, become so familiar to our Minds, that they neither admire them, nor are solicitous to know the Causes of them* †. Men observe the same Conduct in what concerns their Religion. They are accusom'd from their tender Years to entertain such and such Opinions; and as extraordinary as they must appear to them when they have attain'd to a certain Age, it does not strike them. They have contracted such a

† Consuetudine Oculorum affuescunt Animi; neque admirantur, neque requirunt Rationes earum Rerum quas semper vident. *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. cap. 38.

Familiarity with them, and the Custom of regarding them as Fundamentals, has taken such deep Root in them, that it leads them to an implicit Belief of Things that are opposite to natural Reason, or common Sense ; and if by chance there be any doubt in their Minds, so far are they from endeavouring to clear it up, that they themselves would contribute to their Prejudices, and study for Reasons to fortify them.

The Thing that perpetuates Errors in the Generality of Mankind, is a firm Belief they have in certain false Opinions, which they look upon as Principles so certain that they won't give themselves the Trouble to examine them. They would think themselves criminal, if they did but doubt of them for a single Moment. Now 'tis certain, that most of the Opinions which flow from those false Principles, must unavoidably be tainted with the vicious Quality of their Source. A Fanatic who takes it for an evident Principle that he or his Teacher is immediately inspir'd of God, easily admits all the Chimera's of his disorder'd Brain, and heated Imagination, as Revelations from God. He even draws Conclusions which seem just. *I am inspir'd !* says he. *The Spirit which inspires me, being God himself, cannot deceive me.* Ergo, *every thing with which I am inspir'd is true.* 'Tis in vain to go to shew him the Ridicule of the Things with which he pretends to have been inspir'd. He always recurs to his Argument ; and if one offers to attack the Principle which he goes upon, he immediately drops the Dispute, and looks upon the Person who denies the Reality of his Inspiration, as a Man that would not care to own that two and two make four, and that would refuse his Assent to the clearest Evidence.

The Generality of Mankind being so prejudic'd in favour of the mistaken Principles they have once imbib'd, as to be incapable of being mov'd by Probabilities

babilities not only the most apparent, but the most convincing, in Matters that are contradictory to those Principles; we are not to wonder, dear *Isaac*, at the Obstinacy which we perceive in the Sticklers of the several Sects. There are few Persons of so superior a Genius as to be able to conquer the Impressions of their Youth, which gather Strength by Time, and that are willing to carry the Flambeau of Truth in the midst of a Multitude of Errors which they have been accusom'd to look upon as sacred. Religions the most absurd have been adher'd to by the greatest Men. Can the Wit of Man shew any thing so extravagant as Idolatry? Yet how many Genius's of the first Class have been plung'd in the Horror and Folly of Paganism! If they had only reflected for one Moment upon the first Principles of their Faith, they would quickly have perceiv'd the Ridicule of it; but being accusom'd from their tender Years to look upon them as Truths generally receiv'd, they were not at all shock'd by the Absurdities which naturally flow'd from them.

I know, my dear *Isaac*, that there are at this Day many learned Men who maintain, that of all the great Men of Antiquity, none believ'd a Plurality of Gods. But how can they bring meer Conjectures for Proofs, against the Testimonies that subsist in the Writings that are still extant, and which so clearly demonstrate what was the Opinion of their Authors? *Cicero*, who is commonly quoted for one of the Pagan Philosophers that was most firmly persuaded of the Existence of the Divine Being, makes use of the Argument of innate Ideas, and of that of the general Consent of Mankind, to prove that there are several Gods. ' Since there ' is no Law nor Custom, *says he*, that manifests to ' Mankind the Existence of the Gods, this Idea ' must be, as it were, innate with them. Nay, it ' cannot

cannot be but the Existence of those Gods must be real ; because 'tis unavoidable for a Thing not to be true when 'tis received by the general Consent of all Mankind *.

Dost think, dear *Isaac*, that a Man who argues after this manner, believes there is but one God? How can it be ; since the very Argument that he makes use of to prove the Being of several Gods, is contrary to the Hypothesis of one God only? For the Consent which all People give to a Thing is really a Mark of its Truth, it would follow that there was at one time a great Number of Gods, because all the Nations of the Earth were plung'd for several Ages successively in Idolatry ; and because none acknowledg'd the true God but the *Israelites*, who, in Comparison to the whole World, were but a Pin's Point.

'Tis idle therefore to pretend to argue, that it was impossible for People that had a Genius and Learning, to be so blind as to believe the Pagan Religion : for if one does but consider what Submission Men pay to the first Prejudices which they imbibe in their Infancy, and how much they are govern'd by certain Opinions which they look upon as sure Maxims, we shall no longer wonder that they admit all the absurd Consequences that flow from them. 'Tis true that some of the Philosophers rejected the ridiculous Consequences that attend the notion of Polytheism ; for they were aware, that it

* Cùm enim non Instituto aliquo, aut More, aut Lege, Opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensus, intelligi necesse est esse Deos, quoniam insitas rerum, vel potius innatas Cogitationes habemus. Deo autem omnium Natura consensit, id verum esse necesse est. Esse igitur Deos confitendum est. *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, lib. i. p. 68.

was impossible for such Extravagancies to be in the least consistent with the Divine Nature. But it seems however, that they were influenc'd by the Power of Prejudices; and that, tho' they rejected the Consequences of those Principles, they had however a blind Deference for them which they could not shake off. ' The Additions, *says Aristotle*, ' that have been made to the Divine Nature, are ' only Fables accommodated to Mens Capacity. ' We know that there are Gods, and that their ' Essence is divine. Whatever they say more of ' 'em is Fiction, invented for the sake of Society. ' 'Tis from this Principle that the Gods are liken'd ' not only to Men, but Animals *.'

Consider, dear *Isaac*, that *Aristotle*, while he condemns the Chimera's that are vented concerning the Gods, lays down the Plurality of those same Gods as an acknowledg'd Truth, and as an undeniable Principle. As absurd and as impious as this Belief was, it was so generally receiv'd by the *Greeks*, and by the *Greeks* of the highest Dignity, that it cost *Socrates* his Life for presuming to maintain the Unity of the Godhead; and, no doubt, it was the Fear of shocking the Doctrine of *Polytheism*, which induc'd *Epicurus* to allow that Existence to a Plurality of Gods, which he and his Disciples refus'd them in their Hearts. As ridiculous soever as it was to admit

* Tradita autem sunt quædam à Majoribus nostris, et admodum antiquis, ac in Fabulæ Figurâ posterioribus relicta, quod hi Dii sint, universamque Naturam divinam contineant. Cætera verò fabulosè ad Multitudinis Persuasionem, et ad Legum, ac ejus quod conferat Opportunitatem, jam illata sunt. Homini Formis namque, ac aliorum Animalium nonnullis, similes eos dicunt, ac alia consequentia, similia iis quæ dicta sunt. *Aristot. Metaphys. lib. xii. cap. viii. p. 744.*

of Gods, and to deprive them of all Power, yet it was far from exasperating such People as would have look'd upon it to be no less than an Attempt to strike at their first Principles.

We must therefore attribute the Duration of Religions, and the Obstinacy of those who profess them, to the profound Veneration which all Mankind have for the first Sentiments with which they are inspir'd in their Youth. That's the Reason why they are for maintaining the Errors which they follow and defend from the Relation they bear to other Errors to which they give the Name of Principles. Consequently, no wonder if we find great Men, in all the various Religions, solicitous to demonstrate the Truth of them, strenuously convinc'd of that in which they live, and openly condemning all others that are opposite to it. A *Quaker* may argue perfectly just in every thing which does not relate to *Quakerism*; for, since in things that are foreign to his Religion, he examines the Principles which he is willing to build on, he is no more liable to err than another Man.

It would be wrong to object that 'tis impossible for a Man who makes use of his Reason, in the common Course of Things, to be so prejudic'd as to swallow the Absurdities of some of the modern Religions; and that if they who profess them have any Genius, they must have but a mean Opinion of them. In order to be convinc'd that there is no Religion, how absurd soever, but it may be believ'd, we need only examine the ridiculous Parts of the *Pagan*; and since it will appear, that great Men have believ'd a Plurality of Gods, a *Jew*, be he ever so zealous, will not be surpriz'd that *Newton* was an *Arian* †, *Arnaud* and *Pascal* *Papists*, *Limbourg* an

† See *Voltaire's* VIIth Letter concerning the *English*.
Arminian,

Arminian, Claude a Calvinist, Barclay a Quaker, and Galen an Anabaptist. All those learned Men believ'd nothing so absurd, and so contrary to the Light of Nature, or Common-sense, as the Plurality of Gods. The Force of Prejudice, and the Veneration that Men have for Opinions which they look upon as first Principles, must needs have a despotic Power over their Minds, in that it does not permit them to acknowledge their Blindness. Nobody has better describ'd the Folly and Extravagance of *Paganism*, than one of the antient *Nazarene* Doctors, call'd *Arnobius*. He shews, in a Method as evident as eloquent, the Confusion that must be the Consequence of the Equality of the Offerings made to the Gods, by two Nations that are Enemies to each other. 'In that Case it would be unavoidable,' *says he*, for the Gods to know what Party to espouse; and they must either continue neuter, and so be ungrateful to both the Parties, or else must pull down with one Hand what they set up with the other §.' This is what they say happen'd at the Siege of *Troy*, when the Gods, not being able to agree among themselves, and to determine whom to favour, espous'd, after a Division, the Quarrel

§ Quod si Populi duo hostilibus dissidentes Armis, Sacrificiis paribus Superiorum locupletaverint Aras, alterque in alterum postulent Vires sibique ad Auxilium commendari, nonne iterum necesse est credi, si Præmiis sollicitantur ut prosint, eos Partes inter utrasque debere hæsitare, desigi, nec reperire quid faciant, cum suas intelligant Gratias Sacrorum Acceptionibus obligatas? Aut enim Auxilia hinc et inde præstabunt, id quod fieri non potest; pugnabunt enim contra ipsos seipsi, contra suas Gratias Voluntatesque nitentur; aut ambobus Populis Opem subministrare cessabunt; id quod Sceleris magni est, post impensam acceptamque Mercedem. *Arnob. lib. vii. p. 219, &c.*

of the *Greeks* and *Trojans*. *Venus*, she who was form'd to govern the Pleasures and the Graces in *Paphos* and *Cytherea*, was wounded for rashly interfering in the midst of the Combat. However that was not one of the most dishonest Employments of this Goddess; for she had others which would have put a Woman of the least Modesty to the Blush. And therefore one of the antient *Nazarene* Pontiffs reproaches the *Pagan* Philosophers, *That in order to train up their Youth well, they were oblig'd to set before them not the Example of the Deities that they ador'd, but that of wise and virtuous Men* *.

Since Persons of such Wisdom and Learning, and those whose Works of so many Ages standing are still the Admiration of the Learned, since such as they believ'd the Existence of a Number of Gods, and Gods so imperfect, thou wilt frankly own, dear *Isaac*, that there are few Mortals so happy as intirely to conquer all Prejudices; and that its no wonder if we find Men of a superior Genius believing in the most absurd Religions.

Let us therefore be thankful to God that we were born in that of *Moses*; and let us apply ourselves in good earnest duly to discharge all the Duties of it.

* Nihil Homines tam infociabiles reddit Vitæ Perversitate, quam illorum Deorum Imitatio, quales describuntur et commendantur Literis eorum. Denique illi doctissimi Viri, qui Rempublicam, Civitatemque terrenam, qualis eis esse debere videbatur, magis domesticis Disputationibus requirebant, vel etiam describebant, quàm publicis Actionibus instituebant atque formabant, egregios atque laudabiles, quos putabant, Homines potius, quàm Deos suos, imitandos proponebant erudiendæ Indoli Juventutis. *Augustini Epist.* CCII. p. 864.

Farewell, dear *Isaac* ; and don't neglect any longer to let me hear from thee.



LETTER CV.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam,
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt,
formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.*

HAVING endeavour'd to give thee an Idea of the *Dutch* in general, I now propose to acquaint thee of what I have observ'd in particular. The Populace in this Country, as I told thee in my former Letters, are brutish, and often insolent. ' 'Tis a hard Matter, *says a modern Author*, to reform them. Laws may be made to enjoin Obedience to the State, and the Payment of Taxes, but none are made for good Manners ; and every thing that has not the Force of a Law is in no wise obligatory upon the *Dutch*. A Sort of Equality which it is necessary to keep up in Republics is partly the Cause of the Insolence of the People. If the Coach of one of the High and Mighty Lords the States General meets a Country-man's Waggon upon the Road, he must give way as well as the Peasant, and both must bear an equal Share of the Trouble. His Footmen would be sure not to insult the Waggoner, much less to strike him ; for he is a Citizen of the Republic, and owns no Magistrate but when he is in his Office. In other respects they are all upon a Level *.

* *Memoirs of the Marquis d'Argens*, p. 291.

I could not give thee better Reasons to vindicate the Magistrates from the Charge against them in foreign Countries, that they suffer, and sometimes authorize, the Insolence of the Common-people. Liberty is attended with a Sort of Haughtiness, which with Men who know not how to guard against the Abuse of their Happiness, often degenerates into Insolence. But whatever Disorders are occasion'd in civil Society, by the Brutality of the Vulgar, they are perhaps not so considerable as those which accompany despotic Power. For, as nothing can be imagin'd so weak and insolent as the Multitude, so it must be acknowledg'd, on the other hand, that there is nothing more precarious and uncertain than the Welfare of that State where any Person is permitted to do what he pleases with Impunity. The Rank to which an arbitrary Sovereign feels himself exalted, contributes not a little to corrupt his Morals, and to strip him of the good Qualities which he may have received from Nature. *Insolence, says Herodotus †, arises from present Happiness and Prosperity, and whoever has that Vice has all the Vices together.* Into what Misfortunes does not a bad Prince plunge the State which he governs? To what Calamities is it not a Prey? If we ballance the Danger of having a Sovereign who forgets to be the Father of his People, with the Inconvenience attending the Haughtiness and Pride of the Vulgar, it will appear that one Evil is as bad as the other; and when we consider the different Forms of Government, 'tis easy to perceive, *That there is in all something good, and something bad; and that the most rational and surest way, is to esteem that Government under which we are born, the best, and chearfully to submit*

* The History of *Herodotus*, lib. iii. p. 216.

to it *. If the *French*, the *Spaniards*, the *Germans*, &c. reproach the *Dutch* with allowing the Common-people too great Liberties ; the *Dutch* may, in Revenge, reproach them with many other Things, as inconvenient in civil Life, and often more dreadful.

The *Dutch* may be divided into four Classes : The Common-people that I have been mentioning, forms the *First*. The *Second* consists of the Merchants and Burghers, who are People taken up with their Trade and their domestic Affairs, are frank and friendly, and such as take care to preserve their own Rights and Properties, without a Desire to encroach upon those of other Men. They are grave, and their Air is not very engaging, which however makes no Impression upon those that know them ; and the *Dutch* are nevertheless true-hearted for all this Phlegm, which is owing to the Climate, or rather is the Remainder of the *Spanish* Manners. The *Third* Class contains the *Patricians*, that is to say, such as have Offices in the Magistracy. These live in such a plain manner that they are not envy'd by their Fellow-subjects. The Ostracism of the *Greeks* † would be of no Service in *Holland* ; for the Magistrates have such a Satisfaction in being useful to their Country, and in being esteem'd by their Country-men, that they don't aim to purchase themselves Veneration by Prodigalities and Presents that are always destructive of public Liberty ; but by their Exactness in discharging their Functions, and by their Care to maintain that good Order and Union, so necessary to the Tranquility of the

* *La Bruyere's* Characters, or Manners of the Age, p. 453.

† A Banishment for ten Years, to which the *Athenians* condemn'd such of their Citizens whose Power was too exorbitant.

Republic. The *Fourth* Class consists of the Nobles, whose Number is very small. Thou wilt perhaps, be surpris'd, dear *Isaac*, to hear it said, that the Nobles form a distinct State in *Holland*. Most of the People in the neighbouring Countries imagine that Nobility is quite extinct in this; or that it has had no Prerogatives here since the Establishment of the Republic. But 'tis a Mistake; for when the *Hollanders* chang'd their Government, they reserv'd to the Nobles that were then among them, the same Privileges which they had enjoy'd under the Dukes of *Burgundy*, and under *Charles V.* which Privileges are so considerable, that their College, which consists of eight Members, has a Right of deputing to all the sovereign Colleges. Their Number is indeed very small, and the Provinces of *Friesland* and *Groningen* have many more. These Nobles have neither the Malapertness of the *French* Fops, nor the Haughtiness of the *German* Barons, nor the surly disdainful Air of the *English* Lords; but they discharge the Offices committed to them with a great deal of Honour, Frankness and Simplicity. In a Word, it were to be wish'd that the Nobility all over *Europe* had the same Manners, and the same way of Thinking. How few petty Tyrants should we then see in the World, to what there are now!

I own, dear *Isaac*, if Heaven had left it to my Option in what Country to be born, I should have chose *Holland* or *Venice*. I know that there's a very wide Difference betwixt those two Governments; but I know too, that tho' their Tracks are different, they both lead to the same Place, and that they aim at the same Point, which is to render Mankind free and happy. The Republic of *Venice* carries it to her Subjects, like a tender, tho' a severe Mother, who desires to heap Favours on her Children; but yet is so jealous of her Authority, that she does

not permit them to dive into her Designs. Thus do the *Venetian* Nobles deal with their Citizens and the Populace. The Republic of *Holland*, on the contrary, is a complaisant Mother, who looks upon herself in no other Light than as a Sister, who determines nothing without advising with her Children, and who, to banish all manner of Jealousy, has put them all upon a Level; so that she does not fear that the most considerable Towns will inroach upon the others that are inferior. She foresaw all the Inconveniences that might arise from the Ambition of being uppermost, and establish'd the Happiness of her People upon a perfect Equality. In the second Article of the famous Union of *Utrecht*, it is said, 'That all and every of the Lordships ought
' inviolably to preserve their Franchises, Immuni-
' ties, Rights, Statutes and Customs receiv'd from
' their Ancestors.'

Forasmuch as no one Town is subject to another, nothing of general Affairs can be determin'd in any single Province, but by the unanimous Consent of all the Towns that are contain'd in it; nor in the Assembly of the States General, without the Approbation of all the Seven Provinces. This Government seems, at first View, to be liable to Delays which are tedious and prejudicial. 'Tis true that 'tis attended with some Inconveniences; but then it must be own'd, that to these Inconveniences the Safety of the State, and the Band which keeps it united, and which preserves the Harmony of all the Parts, is in some measure owing. Besides, the Number of able Men, through whose Hands an Affair passes, is of no little Service to strip it of every thing that might puzzle and deceive the Understanding. A Prince scarcely ever sees things but dimly, and very often looks upon them with the Eyes only of his Minister. If the Resolutions which he takes in his Council are
speedy,

speedy, they are not a jot the safer for that Reason ; for a little Slowness is not unbecoming in Affairs on which depends the Security of a Government. I am not ignorant that there must not be too much Delay. But tho' it were true, that the *Dutch* Government was attended with some Dilatoriness that was hurtful, that Defect is repair'd by so many other Advantages that I verily believe it deserves the most distinguish'd Rank among the Governments that are perfectly civiliz'd, and wisely conducted.

One Advantage which accrues from the Necessity of consulting all the Towns in Affairs of Importance, is the Constraint and Dependence which the States General, who represent the Body of the Nation, are under, with regard to their Principals, without whose Approbation they cannot act ; so that, tho' they seem to be the Soul of the Republic, yet they are but the Organ of it. They cannot make either War or Peace, or contract Alliances, or increase the Taxes, without the Consent of all the Provinces ; nor can those Provinces do any thing without the Consent of their Towns. In a Government so regulated 'tis impossible that any Persons at the Head of Affairs, be they ever so dissatisfied, should be excited by their Ambition to create such Disturbances, as we find happen'd in the *Roman* Republic, and many other modern ones, which by indulging the Citizens with too great a Power, have been very often expos'd to most fatal Catastrophes.

At *Amsterdam*, there is a perpetual Senate of 36 Persons that have the Right of chusing the Burgo-masters and Echevins, who in their Turn dispose of the subaltern Employments, and observe so good a Rule in the Distribution of the several Offices, that 'tis impossible for a Burgo-master who happens to have more Ambition than his Colleagues, to assume

to himself the sole Right of Nomination to Dignities, and of giving them all to his Creatures.

The Senate of *Amsterdam* has neither the Majesty nor the Grandeur which that of *Rome* had. But then the Members of it have neither the silly Ambition, nor the chimerical Ideas of the old *Romans*. They are so attentive to preserve the Privileges of their Fellow-subjects, to make their Trade flourish, to procure themselves all manner of Accommodation, and to maintain their Liberty, that they don't study to aggrandize themselves by Conquests. All the *Dutch* have the same way of Thinking. They content themselves with the Domains in their Possession. They endeavour to live at Peace, not only with the Powers of *Europe*, but also with People the most barbarous; consequently the Savages with whom they have establish'd Colonies, have found the *Dutch* to be MEN, while the Wretches of *Mexico* and *Peru* have found the *Spaniards* no better than wild Beasts, more cruel than Tygers, thirsting for Blood and Slaughter.

The *Spaniards* have cemented the Colonies which they have form'd, by nothing but Murder and Treachery, while the *Dutch* have only establish'd theirs by Good-nature and Humanity. The People with whom they have form'd Settlements in several Parts of the *Indies*, look upon them at this Day as tutelar Deities, who bring them a thousand things that are useful and necessary for Life; and the Savages that are subject to the *Dutch*, are the better for the Industry and Commerce of this laborious Nation.

Tho' every body is generally employ'd in Trade at *Amsterdam*, yet the Improvement of the Sciences is not neglected. There's a *Schola Illustris*, in which Youth are taught *Divinity*, *Belles Lettres*, *Philosophy* and *Physic*: And independent of this Assistance to the Youth that are desirous of applying to the
Belles

Belles Lettres, there are in *Holland*, and the neighbouring Provinces, several famous Academies; in which Number are those of *Leyden*, *Utrecht*, *Franker*, *Groningen* and *Harderwyck*, which abound with Men of Merit, among whom are several learned Men of the first Class.

Notwithstanding the Attention of the *Dutch* to Commerce, which is the Basis and Foundation of their Employment, yet it can't be deny'd that they are Lovers of the Sciences. And perhaps there is not a Place in the Universe where there are so many Booksellers and Printers as at *Amsterdam*. I have been assured, and am apt to believe it, that there are near 400. From so many Printing-presses, and Booksellers Shops, the whole World is furnish'd with Books, good and bad, of which there are here many of both Kinds. Nor are there wanting Authors, especially such as are hungry and mercenary, of whom, as well as of their Works, I will take care to write to thee what is most remarkable.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and live content and happy; and let me sometimes hear from thee, which is what I have not done for a long time.



L E T T E R C V I.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Madrid, *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Amsterdam.

I N my former Letters I gave thee an Account of the Common-people, and the Friars: In this I shall endeavour to give thee an Idea of the Nobility and Gentry. The Nobility of this Country in

general, look upon Laziness as a Part of their Privileges. A mere Nobleman in *Spain* is a temperate Man; a fine Quality, sure, if it was not occasion'd by Poverty or Sloth! He is proud, serious and ignorant, excessively fond of his own dear Person, and of his Country, despising all others, but doing so much Honour to the *French* as to hate them. He seldom turns his Mind to Arms, but spends his time in his Town, or his Village, without any thing to do but to read old Romances, the Works of St. *Theresa*, or some other Visionary of the like Kind; in short, he is the most obsequious humble Servant of the Monks, and a Slave to the Women from his Birth. So much for the *Spanish* Nobleman*.

The *Grande*s of *Spain* are still more proud and haughty than the mere Nobility. They contended formerly with their Sovereign. But *Philip V.* who was born in *France*, assum'd the same Authority over the *Spanish* Nobility as the Kings of *France* have over the *French*; and the *Grande*s of *Spain* are as

* *Seneca*, when he said that none but Beasts could glory in their Sloth, gave a useful Lesson to the *Spaniards*: Happy for them if they could improve by it! *Gloriari Otio iners Ambitio est: Animalia quædam, ne inveniri possint, Vestigia circa Cubile ipsum confundunt. Idem tibi faciendum est.* *Seneca Epist. LXVIII.* This Irony, how sharp soever it is, fits the *Spaniards* admirably well. For as he spends the Day in reading Romances, the Night in playing on the Guittar, lurking in his Village, without doing any Good to his King or his Country, he wants nothing to preserve that Tranquility and that sluggish Life of which he is so fond, but the Means of concealing his Retirement from the Eyes of such as might turn him out of it. He must therefore imitate those Animals which encompass their Residence with every thing that is capable to conceal it.

submissive now as the other Nobility; tho' some were so very insolent in the Reign of *Charles II.* the Predecessor of the present King, that when two Comedies were play'd at Court, by way of rejoicing for his Recovery from a Fit of Sickness, and every body without Exception was forbid to come upon the Stage, the Duke of *Offuna* plac'd himself there on a Heap of Cushions, and would not stir, tho' he was appriz'd. of the King's Orders.

Notwithstanding the Vanity of the Grandees of *Spain*, and the haughty Airs which they gave themselves in the last Reign, they met with several Mortifications; but the greatest of all was that which they receiv'd by the Promotion of one *Valenzuela* to the Grandeeship. This *Valenzuela* had been Page to the Duke de l'*Infantado*, by whose Death he was left without a Protector, and so poor that he became *passante et corte*, i. e. was forc'd to live by his Wits. By the Assistance of a Monk he made a shift to get a small Place at Court; and being a handsome Man, with a good Genius, he resolv'd to improve his Talents. He made an Acquaintance with Donna *Eugenia*, a *German* Lady, who possess'd the Queen's Confidence. He pleas'd her at least as much as she pleas'd him, and she permitted him to *galeantear* her, which is the usual Term apply'd to such as attach themselves to the Service of the Court-Ladies. Gallantries of this sort are so common that we often see marry'd Men, who make no Scruple to wait upon their Mistresses publicly. Donna *Eugenia* was not insensible of her Lover's Regard for her, and she rewarded them by the Gift of her Hand in Marriage. Fortune who was resolv'd to advance *Valenzuela*, did not stop her Favours to him there; but procur'd him the Friendship of the Queen Regent, who led him from one Employment to another till she advanc'd him to the first Dignity in the King-

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dom,

dom, by making him a Grandee of *Spain* of the first Class, with the double Key.

This News was a terrible Shock to the *Spanish* Noblemen whose Vanity was thereby so mortify'd that they had not Courage to complain of the Affront it put upon them. They star'd at one another, but had not a Word to say more, than *Valenzuela es Grande! O Tempora! O Mores!* One of them was so stung with the Scandal he thought it was to the Grandees, that he resolv'd to see the Face of the Sun no more, since it had been so impertinent as to shine upon such a base Deed. This Don, when he heard the fatal News, took to his Bed, in which after he had tumbled and tofs'd ten Years together, he dy'd. His Servants entering that Morning into his Apartment, and his Valet-de-Chambre opening the Window, he ask'd him gravely, *Que hase il Tiempo?* i. e. *What Time of Day is it?* The Domestic having return'd an answer to this first Question, the next that he ask'd him was, whether his Butcher was made a Grandee of *Spain*; *Mi Carnizero es Grande?* No, my Lord, said he. *Well then, shut the Window,* said the Don. The Comedy was then over for that Day, but it was acted again the next and so on till his Death; and nothing could ever reconcile him either to the Sun or Mankind.

The Fortune of *Valenzuela*, which was the Cause of this Nobleman's Distraction, was ruin'd with as much Rapidity as it was establish'd. The Queen, who protected him having receiv'd an Order from King *Charles II.* to retire to a Convent at *Toledo*, her Favourite was sent to *Chili* in the *Philippine* Islands, after being stripp'd of all his Offices, and taken by Force from a Church to which he fled for Refuge. He supported his Disgrace with very great Constancy; and when he was told that
the

the King had taken all his Posts from him, and left him nothing to bear but his Title, *I perceive then*, said he, very coolly, *that I am much more unhappy than when I first came to Court, and the Duke de l'Infantado made me his Page.*

Mean time tho' the Ruin of *Valenzuela* seem'd to be a Satisfaction, with a Vengeance, for the Affront put upon the Grandees of *Spain*, it was the Cause of their receiving a fresh Mortification. The *Roman* Pontiff, being inform'd that the chief Noblemen themselves had taken *Valenzuela* by Violence from his Sanctuary, excommunicated all that had a hand in that Affair; and they could not be releas'd from the *Roman* Censures, till, like the vilest of Malefactors, they went in their Shirts with Halters about their Necks to the Imperial College; where *Mellini*, the Pope's Nuncio, gave every one of them some Lashes of the Discipline, and so tam'd the *Spanish* Insolence by an *Italian* Insolence, even more vain, and full of Ostentation.

There was a Dispute a long time between the Grandees of *Spain* and the Monks, which should have the Administration of the Government; and by their Brigues and Intrigues, they alternately tripp'd up one another's Heels. The Person whom the Queen trusted with the Management of Affairs, in the Minority of *Charles II.* was Father *Nitard* a *Jesuit*; but he was supplanted by Don *Juan*, *Philip* the IVth's natural Son. That *Jesuit* was so mortally hated by the Populace, that, tho' he was the grand Inquisitor, they cry'd out publicly in the Streets of *Madrid*, *Long live the King, and the Lord Don Juan! and may he always conquer his Enemies! but the D—l take the Jesuit who persecutes him!* As much as Father *Nitard* was hated by the *Spaniards*, he still thought to have the Advantage over his Rival at last; but the exasperated Populace would

not be satisfied with his Disgrace; nothing would serve them but he must be banish'd out of *Spain*; and in short, they mutiny'd, and did not submit till they had obtain'd an Order for sending back the disgrac'd Minister into *Italy*. *Let us get rid of this Jesuit*, they cry'd, *let us send him packing!* He set out accordingly, and as he pass'd along the Streets, every body reproach'd him. Undoubtedly, dear *Monceca*, thou art inclin'd to think that the Fate of this Friar was to be pity'd. Not at all: He was a *Jesuit*, and therefore knew how to bring himself out of Trouble: For retiring to *Rome*, he was some time after made a Cardinal, by the Intrigue of that very Court of *Spain* which had some Years before been oblig'd to banish him.

As a Minister is every where liable to be storm'd, he is more expos'd to it in this Country than in any Part of the World. It very often happens, that a Man who has succeeded perfectly well in a Negotiation committed to his Care, shall be sacrific'd to the Honour of his Country. It will be said that he has not understood its Interests; and the disadvantageous Articles of a Treaty, which he is order'd to conclude, shall be laid to his Charge. Of the Truth of this Fact the following is a convincing Instance:

On the 18th of *August* 1680, the *Spaniards* surpriz'd a Fort which the *Portuguese* had begun to erect in the Island of *St. Gabriel*. As both the Nations were at that time in Peace with each other, the Court of *Lisbon* was incens'd at that Proceeding, and resolv'd to have signal Satisfaction. The Envoy of *Portugal* at *Madrid* receiv'd Orders from the Prince Regent to demand full Reparation of the Damages. The Court of *Spain* having boggled in its Answer, *Portugal* prepar'd to obtain what was refus'd by Force of Arms. *Spain* not being willing

at that time to go to War with *Portugal*, because it was just going to break with *France*, sent the Duke *de Giovenazzo* Embassador to *Lisbon*, where he no sooner arriv'd but he began to complain, and demand Satisfaction. That was then the *Spanish* Court's Method of negotiating. But this Embassador was given to understand that he must talk in another Style, and that all Evasions were of no Effect. He was told in plain Terms, that the Reparation which was demanded by the *Portuguese* Court must be granted, or that Methods were resolv'd to be taken to obtain it. After several Disputes, the Duke, before he sign'd the Articles of the Treaty, dispatch'd an Express to *Madrid*, to inform the Court how Affairs stood, and to receive his final Orders. Then did the Ministers treat him as a Man of no Judgment, and one that had fail'd in his Allegiance to the King; saying, That all the Rules of Wisdom and Good-sense were violated by his Conduct, and so disadvantageous an Accommodation; and that his Instruction gave him no Power to conclude it. All these Circumstances of Anger and Resentment were shewn for the Honour of the Nation; but nevertheless, they did not delay one Quarter of an Hour to conclude the Accommodation, and the Ratification was sent with all Speed to the Duke *de Giovenazzo* †.

During *Philip V*'s Reign, there have been very able Men in the *Spanish* Ministry; but the Storms that rise in all Courts have shook them out of their Places. No Minister is cry'd up more here than Cardinal *Alberoni*. Not only the Foreigners, of whom there are great Numbers in this Country, but several *Spaniards* also, do Justice to this able Minister. Since the Accession of *Philip V.* to the Crown, *Spain* has in a great measure repair'd the Misfortunes

† *Memoirs of the Court of Spain, &c.*

which she suffer'd by the Misconduct of the Persons that were employ'd in Affairs, during the Reigns of *Philip IV.* and *Charles II.* His Troops are numerous, good and well-disciplin'd. *Spain* is One-fourth more populous than it was, by reason of the great Number of *French* and *Flemings* that are settled there; and that Crown, which one while made no manner of Figure, is now in as much Credit as it was heretofore.

Thus the Grandeur of a State depends on the Princes that govern it, or on those whom they trust with the Care of Affairs. How many Empires have been rais'd in a short Space to the Summit of Greatness, at a time when every thing seem'd to threaten their Ruin, and all by the wise Conduct of one or two Sovereigns who have repair'd all the Mischief done by their Predecessors! Who would not have thought at the Death of *Henry III.* that *France* would not have been ruin'd, and intirely broke to Pieces? Every thing seem'd to portend its Destruction; and yet, 8 or 10 Years after, she was in a Condition, by the Management of *Henry IV.* to take a Revenge for the Affronts which she had receiv'd from her Neighbours, during her Misfortunes. Never had the *Spaniards* more Cause to be afraid of *France*, than when that great Prince was robb'd of his Life by the Rage of the Monks. *Spain* believ'd that she should soon regain her Superiority over her Rival. But Cardinal *Richelieu*, in the Reign of *Lewis XIII.* perfected what *Henry IV.* had begun. This Crown was astonish'd to see the very Basis of her Grandeur shaken; and was convinc'd, tho' too late, that the *French* knew how to improve their Advantages incomparably better than the *Spaniards*.

Tho' *Spain* has not so many Resources as *France* has in her own Power, yet two or three Reigns may aggrandize her more than ever, as we may easily judge

judge by what we have seen her do for some Years past.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; and may the God of our Ancestors heap Blessings and Prosperity on thee; and make thee the Father of a numerous Family!



L E T T E R CVII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Madrid, *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Amsterdam.

BEfore *Philip V.* dear *Monceca*, the Kings of *Spain* were Slaves to their Grandeur. They strictly kept to a certain Regulation call'd the *Etiquette*, containing all the Ceremonies which the *Spanish* Monarchs were oblig'd to observe, the Habits which they and their Queens were to wear, the Days when they were to go to the Royal Palaces, the Time of their staying there, the Days of their Processions, their Airings, Travels, with the very Hour when their Majesties were oblig'd to go to Bed, or to rise, the Presents which the Kings were to make to their Mistresses, how they were to be dealt with when a happy Rival has displac'd them, &c. Nay it has been said, that there was a certain Number of Days of the Year mark'd down in that *Etiquette*, when the Monarch must not lie with his Queen. These, no doubt, were the Dog-days, which *Cleontis* so pleasantly exclaims against in *Moliere* *.

* See his *Amphitryon*.

And really it was a very terrible Hardship upon a Monarch to restrain him from going to bed to his Wife when he had a Mind to it. I cannot imagine what Charm of Gravity the *Spaniards* found in that Sort of Celibacy, to make it an Article of the *Etiquette*. A King of *Spain*, in love with his Queen, was as much to be pitied as *Charles II.* King of *England*, when he put himself into the Hands of the *Presbyterians* in *Scotland*, who made him hear four Sermons a Day, oblig'd him to do Penance, and forbid him to game *.

The *Etiquette* was still a greater Check to the Queen-Consorts, who were often forbid Things the most innocent. The *Duchess de Terranova*, *Camerera Major*, or one of the first Ladies of the Bed-chamber to the Wife of *Charles II.* us'd to tell her Majesty, that a *Queen of Spain* must not look out of the *Windows of the Palace*.

An unlucky Accident happen'd to this Princess, wherein the Forms of the *Etiquette* had like to have cost her her Life. She was very fond of riding; and several very fine Horses having been brought to her from the Province of *Andalusia*, she had a Mind to try one of 'em; but had no sooner mounted, when the Horse pranc'd, and rising upon his Hind-legs, had like to have fallen backwards upon her; whereupon she fell off, and her Foot unfortunately hitching in the Stirrup, the Horse ran away, and dragg'd her along to the utmost Peril of her Life. All the Court were Spectators of this Misfortune, but nobody endeavour'd to help the Queen, because the *Etiquette* forbid any Man whatsoever, on Pain of Death, to touch the *Queen of Spain*, and especially her Foot. Why the Foot should be more sacred than the Hand. I can't conceive; but in short the Point was so set-

* *Voltaire's Letters concerning the English.*

tled, and nobody durst approach the Queen's Person. *Charles II.* who was very fond of his Wife, and who, from the Balcony of his Window, saw the Danger she was in, cry'd out vehemently ; but the inviolable Custom, and the *untouchable* Foot, restrain'd the grave *Spaniards* from lending a Hand to help her. However, 2 Gentlemen, viz. *Don Lewis de las Torres*, and *Don Jaime de Soto Mayor*, resolv'd to run all Hazards, in spite of the *Law of the Queen's Foot*, *le Loi del Pie por la Reina*. One caught hold of the Horse's Bridle, and the other of the Queen's Foot ; and, in taking it out of the Stirrup, he put one of his Fingers out of Joint. This done, the Dons immediately went home ; and during, the Confusion, they had an Opportunity to saddle their Horses, and fled from the Punishment they had incurr'd by daring to offend against so august a Custom.

The Queen, recovering from her Fright, desired to see her two Deliverers. A young Lord, their Friend, told her Majesty they were oblig'd to fly from *Madrid*, to escape the Punishment which they deserv'd. The Queen, who was a *French* Woman, knew nothing of the Prerogative of her Heel ; and, to be sure, never would, if it had not been for her Fall. She thought it a very impertinent Custom that Men must be punish'd for saving her Life, easily obtain'd their Pardon from the King her Husband, honour'd them with a Present, and always granted them her Protection.

The same *Etiquette*, which render'd the Queen's Heel so sacred, was a terrible Abatement of her Revenues. She had formerly 500 Pistoles *per* Month, but 200 of them were cut off for certain Charities or Bounties ; for the Princesses good Works were also regulated by the *Etiquette*.

Notwithstanding the Restraint the Queens of Spain have been subject to, some of them have had their Share of Gallantry, and slipp'd their Necks out of the painful ridiculous Collar. The Wife of Philip IV. if we may believe the Historians of that Time, took a Liking to the Count *de Monterey*; but was very much perplex'd how to make him sensible of it. The *Etiquette* had settled the Ceremonial to be observ'd, with regard to the King's Amours; but there was no Provision in it with regard to those of the Queens. This Princess could find no better Expedient than (*one Day, as he was giving her an Account of an Affair, with which she had charg'd him*) to let a Paper drop out of her Hand, which he eagerly snatch'd off the Ground, and presented to her on his Knees. 'Perhaps, says the Queen, you imagine this Paper to be of Importance: You yourself shall be the Judge of it. The Count therein read these Words: *Estoy toda la noche, despierta, sola, triste, y defendo; mis Penas son Martirios, mis Martirios son Gustos: i. e. I spend the Nights without Rest, alone, dull, and forming Desires; my Pain is a Martyrdom, but such a Martyrdom as I take Delight in.* The Duke *de Monterey*, who did not think that a Queen of Spain could debase herself to such a Degree as to be in Love, seem'd not to understand the Meaning of this Billet-doux, but perus'd it with that Coolness common to his Country. The Queen, observing his Indifference, was so enrag'd, that she snatch'd it out of his Hands with Scorn, and said, *Go your ways*; adding this, *You may well say, Domine non sum dignus †, Lord, I am not worthy.'*

† Memoirs of the Court of Spain, by Mademoiselle d'Aunoy, part ii. p. 222.

There is no Rank, nor any Restraint, that can secure a Heart from the Shafts of Love. All the Jealousy and all the Precautions of the *Spaniards*, only hasten the Moment for robbing it of its Freedom. One thing that will surprize thee, dear *Monceca*, is, that notwithstanding this jealous Humour, notwithstanding the Severity of the *Etiquette*, there was a Custom establish'd, and authoriz'd at Court, before *Philip V.* came to the Crown, whereby the Noblemen were privileg'd to gallant the Queen's Maids of Honour; and even the marry'd Men had the Privilege of going under their Chamber Windows, and conversing with them by their Fingers. This Custom is a Language which Love has invented to make amends for the Constraint that People are under in those Countries, where they are not at Liberty to explain themselves but by their Eyes, and making certain Tokens.

Pray, dear *Aaron*, reconcile, if thou canst, that odd Custom of gallanting the Ladies with the chaste Ceremonial of the *Etiquette*. Tho' the *Spanish* Dons have, since the Accession of *Philip V.* abandon'd those ridiculous Impertinences which they consecrated with the Name of the Ceremonial of the Palace; yet they would resume them with the same Ease as they dropp'd them, were it not for the great Number of Foreigners, *French, Italians, Flemings*, &c. with which this Court swarms; and tho' it seems now to resemble that of *France* more than any other, yet the Leaven of the *Spanish* Gravity still remains there.

'Tis almost impossible for a Man who is a Native of this Country, to take to Manners different from those of his Ancestors; and this is a Truth which will easily be acknowledg'd, if one considers the Hatred which the *Spaniards* bear to all Nations. There was a Time, when their Antipathy to the *French* was
carry'd

carry'd to an Excess, but they say 'tis very much abated ; yet, since I have been here, it appears to me, that there are no two Nations whose Genius's are more irreconcilable than the *Spanish* and *French*. *Charles II.* caus'd the Necks of two Parrots, which his Queen kept, to be twist'd off, because they could speak nothing but *French* ; and when he went into her Apartment, and found two little Dogs there, which she was infinitely fond of, *get out, get out, ye French Dogs*, said he ; *Fuera, Fuera, Perros Frances*.

I admire, dear *Monceca*, the secret Springs of Providence. Who would have told that King, so great an Enemy as he was to the *French*, that his Kingdom would shortly devolve to a Prince of that Nation ? Heaven sometimes takes a Pleasure in sporting with the Spleen of weak Mortals. It sees their Designs, and laughs at their Projects. Princes, in the View of the Deity, are but mere Men. He looks on them in the Rank of his other Creatures, and their Inclination often finds less Favour with the Deity than that of some Sages whose Desires are regulated by Virtue.

Consider, dear *Monceca*, the Bounds which have been set by the Almighty Being, to the Ambition of several Princes who have attempted to alter the Face of the World ; how he has stopp'd them in the midst of their Career, and in the twinkling of an Eye destroy'd and overturn'd that Grandeur which they have endeavour'd to raise. To go no further than our own Time, look back upon *Charles XII.* King of *Sweden*, that modern *Alexander*, who was preparing to bind the *Muscovite* in Chains. But Providence order'd it otherwise. His Glory vanish'd in an Instant, and pass'd away like a Dream. That King who conquer'd such a Possess of Enemies, and who gave himself Crowns, became a Wanderer and a Fugitive,

a Fugitive, was oblig'd to fly to *Barbarians* for Refuge, and had no Remains left of his past Greatness but the unhappy Remembrance of it.

Lewis XIV. was two or three times on the Verge of compleating his ambitious Projects, and of intirely destroying that Balance of Power which had been so long settling among the Potentates of *Europe*. If he had dy'd immediately after the Treaty of *Nimeguen*, one would have thought he might have effected his Designs; but he surviv'd that glorious Peace, and the same Hand that had almost render'd him Master of *Europe*, reduc'd him within an Ace of his Ruin. When his Enemies triumph'd over him too much, and ascrib'd to themselves what was owing only to the Goodness of the Supreme Being, that same Being turn'd the Scale at *Denain*, and by degrees reduc'd Things to their former Condition; so that, after a War of 10 Years, neither of the Parties had gain'd much Ground.

I laugh, dear *Monceca*, when I see certain Politicians foretelling the Ruin or Aggrandisement of a People, 20 or 30 Years beforehand. To hear them, one would almost swear that the Divine Being had imparted his august Secrets to them, and permitted them to look into that Book where he has enter'd the Destinies of all States and Empires. The Death of one Prince, the Marriage of another, a Confessor, a Mistress, a Nothing, in short, destroys all the vain Conjectures, and all the false Reasonings, of these pretended Politicians.

All *Europe* thought, one while, that the Genius of the House of *Bourbon* would strike to the House of *Austria*; and who would not have thought as much in the Time of *Charles V.* who was almost Master of all *Europe*? But if that same *Charles V.* was to come upon the Earth now, how great would be his Surprize? ' What's become, *he would say,*
' of

‘ of my Kingdom of Spain? *The Answer would be,*
 ‘ ’Tis in Possession of a Prince of the House of
 ‘ *Bourbon.* And what of *Franche Comte* my fa-
 ‘ vourite Province? *The Answer would be, France*
 ‘ has taken it as well as *Alsace*, and a Part of *Hai-*
 ‘ *nault* and *Flanders.* And, what’s become, *the*
 ‘ *Monarch would also say,* of the Kingdoms of *Na-*
 ‘ *ples* and *Sicily?* These two, *the Answer would*
 ‘ *be,* are also in the Hands of a Prince of the
 ‘ House of *Bourbon*; and besides these Losses which
 ‘ your Descendants have sustain’d, *Holland* and
 ‘ six other Provinces turn’d Commonwealths, a
 ‘ little after your Death. If it be so, *Charles V.*
 ‘ *would be apt to say,* my Descendants sure must be
 ‘ all extinct. Pardon me, *the Reply would be,* they
 ‘ subsist still, and are as potent as ever. Alas! *he*
 ‘ *would cry out,* how can that be? Why thus, *he*
 ‘ *would be told;* your Successors are Masters of *Tus-*
 ‘ *cany,* the Duchies of *Parma, Placentia* and *Milan*;
 ‘ consequently you see, that what they possess in
 ‘ *Italy* is equal to what you had there. Instead of
 ‘ *Spain,* which you had in some measure dismem-
 ‘ bled from the other Estates of your Family, by
 ‘ dividing your Inheritance, they have all *Hungary,*
 ‘ *Transylvania,* and a Part of *Wallachia.* Those
 ‘ Kingdoms which border upon one another, and
 ‘ join to *Austria,* form, if we include *Bohemia,*
 ‘ *Silesia* and *Moravia,* one of the most magnificent
 ‘ Governments in the World; and being thus put
 ‘ together, are really equivalent to all the States
 ‘ which you left so dispers’d.’

I am certain, dear *Monceca,* that *Charles V.* if he
 was to hear all this, would be fully convinc’d that
 ’tis with Empires as it is with Money; and that
 the Divine Being has decreed that they should have
 a sort of Circulation, and pass into different Fa-
 milies,

milies, and often into those which one would think should least of all expect them.

Farewell, dear *Monceca* ; live content ; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Prosperity !



LETTER CVIII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, and now in Egypt.

THO' there's a Variety of religious Sects at *Amsterdam*, yet the Number of Languages which are spoke there is greater. This Diversity of Idioms often makes me think of the famous Confusion of Languages at the time of the audacious Undertaking to carry the Tower of *Babel* to the Firmament.

Were we to follow the Opinion which is most generally receiv'd, and founded upon the Scriptures, we should believe that the *Hebrew*, or the Language of our antient Patriarchs, was the universal Language of the World before *Noah's* Children began to erect that famous Tower. Yet this Opinion, how probable soever, is not admitted universally. Several Authors pretend, that what *Moses* says of the Confusion of Tongues, denotes or means nothing more than the Misunderstanding which happen'd among Men so rash as to offer to erect an Edifice against the Divinity. And these Authors think their Opinion justify'd by the Practice of the Orientals ;

who, after the Dispersion of Nations, made use of different Dialects, rather than Languages. They add, that had there not been that miraculous Confusion of Tongues, the scattering of the People, the Establishment of Empires and Republics, the Diversity of Laws and Customs, and the Commerce of Nations already separated, might occasion some Alteration in the Language *.

The Manner in which the Generality of Languages is form'd by being deriv'd from one another, seems to support this Hypothesis. The *Greeks*, who, in all Appearance, were a Colony of *Egyptians* and *Phœnicians*, insensibly alter'd the Language of their Fathers, and by degrees the *Greek* Tongue was form'd upon the Ruins of the *Egyptian*, which the *Greeks* totally forgot. All the different Idioms of the *Persians*, *Scythians* and Oriental Nations, have a very great Affinity with one another, and seem to flow from the *Hebrew* as their natural Fountain. Every Day we see some new Languages form'd, others extinct or declining ; and it is very possible that the first Difference which creeps into a Language may happen naturally like those which we perceive happen every Day.

The *French* is an authentic Proof of the manner how Languages are born, and die insensibly. No doubt but the *French* which is spoke at this Day, comes from that which was the Language there five hundred Years ago : But if they who spoke it then were now to come again into the World, they would be as much at a Loss to understand what a *Parisian* of the *Street* of *St. Denys* says, as such *Parisian* would be to understand them.

* See Father *Lami's* Rhetoric ; or, The Art of Speaking. lib. i. cap. xv. p. 79.

The *French* is not the only Language in which this total Change has happen'd : 'Tis common to a great many others. *Quintilian* affirms, that the Language which was spoke in his Time, was so different from that of the primitive *Romans*, that the Priests understood very little of the Hymns which the first Priests sang to the Deities whom they worshipp'd *.

So impossible is it to prove demonstrably that all, or at least, the principal Languages were form'd at the time of the Confusion of *Babel*, that there's no knowing what Language was spoke at that time. There are many People that deviate from the common Opinion, which gives the Preference to the *Hebrew*. There are intire Nations that challenge this Pre-eminence. The *Egyptians*, the *Ethiopians*, the *Chinese*, the *Greeks* too, as ignorant as they were of their own Original, believ'd their Language to be as antient as any other whatsoever. A *Greek* Author † very confidently affirms, that Men springing out of the Earth like the Herbs of the Field, and Frogs in a Pond, and by consequence born in several Parts of the World, form'd themselves into several different Societies, who invented each their Language. That none but an Idiot will assert, that Men are form'd in a Night's time, like Mushrooms in a Garden, is what I grant ; but the Uncertainty which the *Greeks* were under concerning the Origin of Mankind, and of the Difference of Languages, made them adopt so extravagant an Opinion §.

* *Quint. Instit. Orat. p. 11.* † *Diodorus of Sicily.*

§ That was really the Opinion of the politest *Greeks*, who had a Notion that they were all born in the Country where they dwelt, and that they were produced out of the Earth like Insects. Therefore they assum'd the vain Title of *Indigenæ*. See *Father Lami's Art of Speaking*, lib. i. chap. xv. p. 77.

An Author *, whose Works were printed at *Venice* many Years ago, went half way to revive the old Hypothesis of the *Greeks*. 'Tis true, he did not declare that Men sprung out of the Earth ; for this Supposition would have appear'd somewhat extraordinary at that time of Day ; but he affirm'd, that *Adam* spoke *Greek* ; and he argued after this manner, as I find it reported by a learned *French* Rhetorician, who has given the most just Summary of the Matter of any Writer that I know. ' *Ericus*'s Proofs are, that as soon as the first Man open'd his Eyes, he admir'd the Beauty of the handy Works of God, and cry'd out, *O !* consequently he hit upon the *Greek* ω : And afterwards the ε, when no sooner was *Eve* taken from his Rib, but he cry'd out ε ε. He says that the First-born of *Adam* crying at his Birth, the Noise he made was, ε ε ε ε ; as the second Child, who, says the Author, had a squeaking Voice, pronounc'd, when he cry'd, ε ε ε ε. By such Arguments as these he pretends to prove that the *Greek* Language is as natural as a certain Singing is to any particular Species of Birds †.

Is it justifiable, dear *Isaac*, for Men of Learning, or at least such as profess themselves Students, to vent such wild Absurdities ? I could prove by this Author's own way of arguing, if I had a Fancy for it, that the Language of the *Laplanders*, or that of the *Caribbees*, is the most antient. I could easily discover, in the first things done by *Adam*, Matter enough to imagine that he articulated the oddest Sounds. I should be glad to know of this Writer, who revealed to him that when *Adam* saw the wonderful Works of the Creation by God, he chose to

* *John Peter Ericus*.

† *Father Lami's Art of Speaking, ut supra.*

cry out *O* rather than *A*. This first Vowel denotes a greater Astonishment than the other : For it is form'd by opening the Mouth, and commonly falls from us when we are struck with Admiration : Whereas *O* is a Sound not so proper to express our Surprise §. I laugh, dear *Isaac*, while I confute such Trifles. Methinks I see M. *Fourdain* taking his first Lesson out of the Grammar, and exclaiming stupidly, *Ab ! les belles Choses ! les belles Choses !* *O* charming Things * !

How ridiculous soever is the Supposition that *Adam* cry'd out, *O* ! when he saw the wonderful Works of God ; yet 'tis nothing near so silly a Conjecture as to found the *I*, or *Iota* of the *Greeks*, upon the squeaking Voice of his second Child. 'Tis really abusing the Liberty which some Authors have taken to impose upon the Public, the causing such silly Stuff to be printed, and giving it out too with such a dogmatical Assurance. Such Fooleries are scarce tollerable even in *Rabelais*. Is it not better to own frankly one's Ignorance of a Thing, than to go to persuade People we know it, and to make use of such pitiful Reasons to demonstrate it ?

I believe, dear *Isaac*, that if a Man will argue rationally, it must be honestly confess'd, that no body knows what Language *Adam* spoke ; and that nevertheless it was more likely to be the *Hebrew* than any other. After all, what matters it if it be evident that the Confusion of *Babel* only spread over the Understanding, and that what is said of the Origin of Languages must be understood in this Sense ? 'Tis sufficient for us to know for our Satisfaction,

§ The Reader will observe that the Anthor means the *A* in the *French* Alphabet, which is sounded different from what 'tis in ours, as if we were to say *aw*.

* *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, a Comedy of *Moliere*.

that before the Dispersion of the Nations, there was but one Language ; and that all others were form'd afterward. For as to the Opinion of *Diodorus of Sicily*, and some atheistical Philosophers of this Age, who pretend that Men born of the Earth, form'd several Languages the Moment they began to exist, according as they rang'd themselves into different Societies, 'tis an absurd Mistake, which flows from their abominable Principles. 'Tis probable, that if Men could not have understood one another absolutely as soon as they were created, instead of staying together, and endeavouring to unite together, and form themselves into Societies, they would have wandered in the Woods, like the Animals, and would never have sought, by a common Consent, to attach certain Ideas to certain Sounds.

Whatever the Atheists may say of it, we must have recourse to the Divine Being to trace the Origin of the first Language that was ever spoke by Men. 'Twas the Divinity that taught it to *Adam*, or at least *infus'd it into him, with all the other Knowledge which he gave him* ; tho' I am far from asserting, that our first Father receiv'd universal Science from God : For it is my Opinion that the Divine Being only granted him so much Knowledge as was necessary for his prudent Conduct.

If the supreme Being was not the Source from whence the first Language flow'd that ever was spoke by Men, I would fain know how Men, form'd like Flowers that spring up in a Meadow, could communicate their Ideas to one another, and assemble and agree together about such and such things as are necessary to the Formation of a Language of which none of them had an Idea ? Is it not probable that they would rather have endeavour'd to gratify their irregular Appetites, than to form that surprising Academy which the Atheists

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constitute of Men, who knew no Sound that could be of Use to them for communicating their Ideas ?

‘ God, *says one of the most illustrious and most rational Philosophers* *, having made Man a sociable Creature, not only inspir’d him with a Desire, and put him under the Necessity of living with those of his own Species, but moreover gave him the Faculty of Speech, that it might be the great Instrument, and the common Band of that Society. For this Reason Man has naturally his Organs fram’d in such a manner, that they are proper to form the articulate Sounds which we call *Words*. But this was not sufficient to form Language ; for Parrots, and several other Birds, may be train’d up to form articulate and very distinct Sounds ; and yet those Animals are no ways capable of Language. It was therefore necessary, that besides articulate Sounds, Man should be capable of making use of those Sounds as Signs of inward Conceptions, and to establish them as so many Tokens of the Ideas which we have in the Mind, to the end that by such means they might be manifested to others, and that consequently Men might communicate their Thoughts to one another.’

This, dear *Isaac*, is what we ought to abide by. Reason, and the Light of Nature, convince us of the Justness of this way of arguing ; which, let what will be said against it, cannot, I think, be shaken. Nevertheless, as there is no Opinion, how evident soever it appears, but may be attended with Difficulties that escape the Notice of those who give their Consent to it with a Positiveness that hinders them from perceiving the Force of the Objections ;

* *Locke's Philosophical Essay on Human Understanding, lib. iii. cap. i. p. 222.*

I shall be oblig'd to thee, dear *Isaac*, if thou wilt let me know thy Opinion : I shall be the fonder of my own, when I know it has thy Approbation. And if thou judgest that I do not think rightly, I shall endeavour to get quit of my Prejudices, and to relish thy Arguments. No body has a better Talent than thou hast for Persuasion ; a Gift which is only bestow'd upon few Persons. A great many People confound their Adversaries without affecting their Minds, and making them alter their Opinion. A Regent of a College, arm'd with Syllogisms and Enthymems, pushes his Antagonist quite out of the Field. He makes use of the Privilege of abusing Words to perplex Reason, and from one Argument to another, reasoning always according to the Rules of Logic, he comes at last to establish the greatest Absurdity ; but without convincing those with whom he disputes. The Mind cannot bear with Arguments which it perceives to be false, tho' it cannot explain the Fallacy. This sort of Argumentation, which the *Nazarene* Doctors so much cry up, has a much greater Tendency to corrupt the Understanding, than to aid and perfect it. And we see that there are a great many People, who, tho' they never study, reason in a manner much more clear and concise than certain Professors of Philosophy.

'Tis not to the Ignorance of Logic that we must ascribe the Defect which is observ'd in most Mens way of arguing, but to the Deficiency of Ideas, to the Erroneousness and Obscurity of what Ideas they have, to the bad Principles which they have imbib'd, and to the Prejudices with which they are tainted. And they argue more or less sensibly, according as they have more or less of these Failings.

Farewell, dear *Isaac* ; live content and happy ; and let me hear from thee.

LETTER



L E T T E R C I X.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Madrid, *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Amsterdam.

I Am now, dear *Monceca*, to present thee an Account of the most exquisite Scene of Horrors ; and to give thee a Picture of that barbarous Inquisition, nourish'd and fatten'd by the Blood of our Brethren, and by that of several unhappy *Nazarenes*, who have had the Misfortune to have any Monks for their Enemies. Don't think I am prompted by Spite and Envy, to put Colours that are too black upon any thing. I shall only tell thee what I have heard from several *French*, *Germans*, and *English*, who have been Witnesses of the Bloody Executions ordered by this Monkish Senate, which has been directed by the *Furies*, conducted by Avarice, and supported by Superstition.

When an *Auto de Fé*, or an Act of Faith, is order'd by the Inquisition, a great Scaffold is erected in the Great Square ; where all the World hires Belconies and Windows, and comes to see this terrible Spectacle, as to a solemn Feast, at which the whole Court, King, Queen, Ladies, Embassadors, &c. are present.

The Inquisitor's Chair is a Sort of Judgment-Seat, rais'd higher than the King's. Opposite to this Throne an Altar is erected, upon which the *Nazarenes* offer to the Deity the Blood of those unhappy Creatures that they are for depriving of Life. In

the midst of their Ceremonies they break off their Prayers, when the grand Inquisitor descends from his Amphitheatre in his *Pontificalibus* ; and, after having made his *Salute* to the Altar, which is erected to Avarice and Cruelty, he goes up to the King's Throne, followed by some of the Officers of the Inquisition ; and the Prince, who then stands up with the Constable of *Castile* by his Side, holding the Royal Sword erect, swears to observe the Oath, which is read by a Member of the Royal Council ; an Oath which obliges him to authorize all the Actions of the Inquisition.

This done, the unfortunate People condemn'd to be tortur'd are brought forth, and carry'd all round the public Square. Those who are not condemn'd, and who are only doom'd to cruel Imprisonment, wear a *Sanbenito*, which is a large Scapulary of yellow Cloth, or Canvas Shirt, charg'd with St. *Andrew's* Cross, painted red. They who are so unfortunate as to be burnt, are dress'd in long Robes of a grey Colour, full of painted Flames. And they who are not willing to turn *Nazarenes* wear the Effigies and Pictures of Devils, besides a sort of Scapulary, upon which is describ'd, *Fouego rebuelto*, i. e. a Fire stirr'd up.

The *Grandeos* of *Spain*, and the chief *Spanish* Noblemen, supply the Place of Marshal's-men at these frightful Ceremonies ; for they bring the pretended Criminals that are to be burnt, to the Stake, bound with Halters. Thus do Superstition and Bigotry make the Don *Diego's*, the Don *Sancho's*, the Don *Pedro's*, and the Don *Garcia's*, not only Slaves to the Monks, but Lacqueys to the Hangmen.

To increase the Torture of the poor Wretches that are doom'd to the Rage of the Flames, a Parcel of ignorant inhuman Friars bawl out the most scandalous Reproaches in their Ears, together with their
sense-

senseless Arguments. In fine, they are thrown head-long into the Fire which is kindled for them. Upon this Occasion, dear *Monceca*, appears the Constancy of our Nation. There are several faithful *Jews*, the Descendants of the antient *Israelites*, who throw themselves into the Flames ; others burn their Hands and Feet before they leap into the Fire, and preserving as much Presence of Mind as *Mutius Scævola* that illustrious *Roman*, who suffer'd his Hand to be consum'd in a Coal Fire, they sing Praises to the God of *Israel* in the midst of such terrible Torment.

The barbarous *Spaniards* are not mov'd by all these Cruelties ; neither Age nor Sex, nothing can affect them. A *Nazarene* Author, whom they have no Reason to suspect, reports what follows. ' Among the *Jews* that were burnt, there was a ' Girl seemingly not seventeen Years of Age, who, ' standing on that Side where the Queen was, petition'd her for her Pardon. She was wonderfully ' pretty, and she said to her, " Great Queen, Will " not your Royal Presence, make some Alteration in " my Misfortune ; Consider how young I am, and " that I am to suffer for a Religion which I suck'd " in with my Mother's Milk." The Queen turn'd away her Eyes, and seem'd to take great Pity on her. Yet she never durst so much as mention the saving her *.

What Inchantment, therefore, dear *Monceca*, could make Men so blind as to become Slaves to such Cruelties ? Can any Nation be so infatuated, so abandon'd to its Prejudices, as not to make use of Reason, and not to abolish Executions so contrary to the Law of Nature ? The *Nazarene* Monks are

* *Memoirs of the Court of Spain*, by M. d' Aunoy, Part II. p. 66.

very pernicious Magicians, because they confound the human Understanding, and consequently colour the foulest Deeds with the Title of Virtues. Consider, dear *Monceca*, what an unlimited Power they have in *Spain*. A Queen dares not intercede for the Pardon of a young Girl of Sixteen, tho' she has been guilty of no other Crime than believing the Religion which she imbib'd in her Infancy. The Authority of the Throne itself durst not stand to dispute with the Monastic Power, and is afraid of being a Prey to the Attacks of that Monster supported by Superstition ?

The most shocking thing of all in these bloody Tragedies, is the Indulgences that the *Roman Pontiffs* have attach'd to them. They who lead the poor condemn'd Wretches to the Fire, and throw them into the Flames, gain Indulgences for 100 Years ; and they who content themselves only with seeing them executed, obtain 50. Just Heaven ! What Horror, and what Abomination is this, dear *Monceca* ! The most crying and most detestable Crimes are made a salutary Means to attain to the Presence of the Divine Being ! Avarice, Cruelty, Fury and Rage, are the Virtues of *Spanish Nazarenism* ! And the *Nazarenes*, who in *France* and *Germany*, boast their Abhorrence of Blood, have Brethren in the Inquisition-Countries, that consecrate Murder under the Pretence of Religion, and make their Cruelties an essential Article of their Faith !

The Day after those unhappy Wretches are burnt is a sort of Festival, when all the Monks go in Procession to the principal Church ; and they carry the Pictures of the Condemn'd, as if they were Trophies of a Victory obtain'd over the Enemy, with these Words, *Morreo quemado por Hereje relapso*, i. e. *I die for relapsing into Heresy* ; and under those who persist in declaring their Innocence, is inscrib'd, *Por Hereje*

reje convicto negativo ; i. e. *For denying their Heresy after being convicted of it* : And under those who persist in their Belief ; *Por Hereje contumas*, i. e. *For obstinate Heresy*.

The Fury of the Monks is not yet satisfied with this sort of Triumph ; it extends so far as to insult the Manes of such as have been dead many Years : For they put into certain Chests (which they call *Carochas*) the Bones of some which they dig out of the Ground, and even proceed against them after Death. Consequently Death and Burial can be no Screen from the Hatred of the Monks ; for they persecute their Enemies beyond the Grave. 'Tis not only in *Spain* where such Sacrileges are committed, but in several other Countries they are guilty of such Outrages ; and the Tombs are there violated upon Pretence of Religion.

If one did not see it, one could hardly believe what a vast Power the Monks have acquired in the Countries of the Inquisition. Reason cannot bear to be told, that there have been Men so foolish, and so weak, as by submitting to the arbitrary Power of the Monks, to abandon their natural and civil Rights, and to divest the common Tribunals of their legal Jurisdiction, in order to transfer it to new ones, compos'd of the Dregs of Mankind.

The Power which the Monks have acquir'd is founded upon the most crafty Politics. A counterfeit Zeal to extirpate our Nation, and certain *Nazarenes* that were call'd *Heretics*, serv'd as a Pretence. At first, the Inquisition was only establish'd to take Cognizance of one single Case. But the silly People did not see that this single Case drew in all others after it. For what Actions, good or bad, are not brought before the spiritual Court ? *Judaism*, *Heresy*, the Observance of all the Precepts of the *Nazarene* Law, Oaths, Crimes committed against the
Divine

Divine Worship, Bigamy, Sodomy, the robbing of Churches, the Insults committed on Priests and Monks, Sorcery, and in short, a long Train of many other Matters that are link'd with the *Nazarene* Faith.

The People were astonish'd when they saw, too late, what an exorbitant Power they had given to the Monks. They had neither the Strength nor the Courage to take it from them; they kiss'd the Chains which they had put about their own Limbs; and they became the chief Instruments of the Tyranny under which they groan'd. In fine, the sovereign Pontiffs, by the Help of their Bulls, and by the Assistance of those same Monks, whose Authority they were for favouring in order to establish their own, persuaded the People at the Long-run, that the Maintenance of the Power of the Clergy was a thing necessary to Religion. The superstitious *Spaniards*, the ignorant *Portuguese*, and the fanatic *Italians*, not only consecrated the unjust Tribunal of the Inquisition throughout their own Countries, but would fain have establish'd it among their Neighbours. However the latter too well knew this infernal Court of Justice to submit to it. *Spain* lost a Part of the *Netherlands* for attempting to subject them to the Inquisition; and *France*, THEN so wise as not to suffer its Privileges to be invaded, vigorously resisted all the Attacks of the sovereign Pontiffs.

The Tribunal of the Holy Office is so abhorr'd by several *Nazarene* Nations, that the very Name of it makes them tremble. A *Jew*, whose Father has been burnt, and who must have suffer'd the same Punishment if he had not fled, is not more shock'd at the terrible Name of the Inquisition, than a Counsellor of the Parliament of *Paris* when Mention is made to him of that horrid Tribunal. There's not a Country Gentleman but had rather suffer the worst of Misfortunes than be subject to any Jurisdiction, except
that

that of the temporal Judges, or to own any other Master but his King, or any other Executioners of his Will and Pleasure but the Parliaments.

Notwithstanding the Credit which the Monks had for a long time in *France*, and especially at the time of the League, when they were supported by *Spain*, they never durst introduce the Inquisition into that Kingdom, tho' they secretly attempted it; but they met with so much Opposition, that they plainly saw they should intirely ruin their Credit, instead of augmenting it.

And indeed, all the several States of the Kingdom are concern'd to hinder the Establishment of this unjust Tribunal. The King, who is an absolute Sovereign in his Kingdom, would have a Rival in the grand Inquisitor. The twelve Parliaments would be little better than Country Court-Leets. The Forces would be more under the Command of the Monks than of their General Officers. The Bishops would find the common Priests bearing greater Sway than themselves in the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. The Clergy, as well as all the Common-people, would become Slaves to the Monks, and the Victims of their Avarice and Ambition. The *French* Nobility, who have been so much us'd to despise this Gentry, and to look upon them in general as the Excrement of Mankind, would be very glad if they could have the Favour to be admitted into the Number of *Familiaries del Sancto Officio*, or Familiars of the Holy Office. And in short, the very Dukes and Peers would have the Privilege of gaining a hundred Years Indulgence, by conducting unhappy People inhumanly to the Stake; and consequently would have the Reputation of being the Valets of the Executioners.

There's no Fear now, dear *Monceca*, that the Inquisition will ever be introduc'd into any of those Countries

Countries where it is not already establish'd. Its Terrors are too well known ; and I am certain, that there's not an *European* in his Senses, but would rather turn *Mussulman*, than be subject to a cruel Dominican, or such other implacable Persecutor.

Farewell, dear *Monceca* ; and may'st thou never live but in Countries where Wisdom and Justice are as well establish'd as that in which thou art now.



L E T T E R CX.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam,
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt,
formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

IN a late Letter of mine I mention'd what a great Number of Printers and Booksellers there were at *Amsterdam* : There's the same Number in the other Towns in Proportion. No doubt thou wilt conclude, there must also be a large Tribe of Writers in the Country to serve so many Presses, and to furnish the Booksellers with the new Books which they publish every Day. There is nothing so true ; for the Authors here are almost as numerous as the Statues were in old *Rome*, whose Number exceeded that of the Inhabitants of a common Town *.

If

* Has statuas primùm *Tusci* in Italiâ invenisse referuntur, quas amplexa Posteritas penè parem Populum Urbi dedit

If one were to make a Muster of all the sorry Scribes that swarm in the *United Provinces*, one might raise a Colony, in which good Sense and Judgment have not been seen for a long time.

Thou wilt be at a Loss to what to ascribe this Multitude of Authors, and to imagine how it comes to pass that the *Cacoethes Scribendi* is more infectious in this Country than in any other. There's a Concurrence of several Circumstances to maintain and augment the Number of those Stainers of Paper. Some are Monks, stripp'd of their Orders; who, after having abandon'd their Convents, and being destitute of Subsistence, fancy that a Book is as easily made as a sorry Sermon. Others, hearing the common Talk of new Books that are printed, become Authors by Infection. The Itch of Writing in this Country, is a Distemper that spreads like Fanaticism. I compare bad Writers to the Convulsionaries of *Paris*; for, like them, they are acted by a sort of Enthusiasm, of which they don't know the Cause. The Booksellers scarce trouble themselves whether a Book be good or bad: If it be but new, they always find Customers for it, by advertising it in the *Gazettes*, with some important Title. Amongst the many Journals that are publish'd, they have always a Property in the Impression of one or other of them, in which, by Consequence, they give a pompous Character of the most pitiful Book; which at the same time is no Grievance to the Public, because they have known for a long while, that

dedit quàm Natura procreavit. *Cassider. Var. lib. vii. cap. 15.* "The *Tuscans* are reported to have been the first Inventors of these Statues, which their Posterity were so fond of, that the Number which was carv'd was almost equal to that of the Souls which were born."

Works of this kind are only written to damn the Copies of some Booksellers, and to commend those of others.

When a Book is so bad that a good Part of the Edition remains unfold, 'tis advertis'd a second time, a Year after, under another Title, with the Addition of some Preface as bad as the Work itself; and by the Help of this Craft, the rest of the Edition is all bought up. In short, they are never at a Loss, in *Holland*, for Expedients to put off those Books which the Booksellers can't vend to their Customers; for those that they can't dispose of by Retail, they sell by the Lump to the Butter-women and Grocers, and especially to the latter; in whose Shops one may find a great Number of Tracts printed ten or twelve Years ago; so that, six or seven Authors excepted, which are for the most part Natives of *Holland*, there are few Writers that live in this Country but may there pick up a large Collection of the Books they have publish'd.

It would not be to any Purpose to give you the Names of these Shrimps in the Commonwealth of Learning; whose Names are moreover as contemptible as their Works. I believe it will be as well if I endeavour to give thee an Idea of some Writers that are worth knowing: *Boerhaave*, 's*Gravesande*, and *Vitriarius*, are great Men. *Musembroek* has made a Collection of good Experiments in Physic; and thou art not ignorant that *Barbeyrac* is a good Translator. There are also in the Academies of these Provinces some other Persons, who are to be esteem'd for their Learning and Probity. Among the Ministers and the Clergy, there are also some of distinguish'd Merit; and I have heard *Saurin* mention'd a thousand times as an excellent Preacher. But the Number of these Authors is so small in Proportion to the others, that there's no Comparison;
tho'

tho' in order to do Justice to the *Dutch*, it must be confess'd, that all those bad Writers, or at least the major Part of them, are Foreigners. There are several that pretend to write in *French*; but when their Books come into *France*, every body is surpris'd to find them written in the *Gascoign* or *Norman*, or the Style of *Lower Bretagne*. Nay, there are some which do so partake of the different Idioms, that there's no guessing what Language they are written in; and one would swear it to be *French*, patch'd out of *Greek*.

'Tis to be fear'd, dear *Isaac*, that this Tribe of paltry Authors will intirely corrupt the Taste, not only of the Inhabitants of this Country, but also of most People who apply themselves to reading. I compare the Shops of certain Booksellers to the Laboratories of some noted Chymists, who compose Philtres to disturb the human Understanding, and to poison the Nourishment which it may be capable of receiving from the Reading of good Authors. As in *France* they examine Books before they are printed, to see whether the Authors have said any thing to expose the Monks, I could wish that the Books which are printed in *Holland* were revised, to see if there be nothing in them contrary to Good-sense; and that they would do the same Service to Mankind as they do to a Company of lazy Drones, whose Order and Profession have been by antient Superstition render'd venerable. At *Paris* they make no scruple to hinder the Impression of a Work which bears too hard upon the Court of *Rome*, or which treats too freely of Indulgences, or which extols *Arnaud* for a great Man: But, alas! is it not of much more Importance to stop the Circulation of thirty Tracts which deprave the Reader's Taste, banish Good-sense, and darken the Light of Reason?

I wonder whether the *Dutch*, who are always attentive to the Welfare and Tranquility of civil Society, have made this Reflection. Perhaps they have. The Fear of introducing a Custom, which, in Process of Time, might strike at that Liberty which is so dear to them, has hinder'd them from stopping the Circulation of those Books, so pernicious not only to the Republic of Letters, but even to all Mankind : For the *Dutch* are fond of the Sciences, have an infinite Esteem for Men of Learning, and give them a hearty Reception from what Country soever they come. *Bayle* and several other *Frenchmen* have been courted and caress'd by the chief Members of the Republic. We observe in *Holland* what has been seen in few other Countries for near 1700 Years. The City of *Rotterdam* had such a Sense of the Virtues of *Erasmus*, that it caus'd his Statue to be erected in the public Square. 'Tis paying a true Regard to the Merit of the learned, to erect such a Monument to an able Writer. This Statue seems to have chang'd both its Form and Matter, in Proportion as the Republic flourish'd. It was at first of Wood only, and was erected in 1540. Afterwards there was one of Stone, set up in 1567. And lastly, one of Brass, the same that we see now, was plac'd there in 1622. If we live to another Century, perhaps we may see one of Gold. What is surprising is, that *Delft*, which is so near to *Rotterdam*, and which has been no less honour'd by the celebrated *Grotius*, has not erected the like Statue to that great Man.

When I consider, dear *Isaac*, the manner how this State was form'd, I cannot forbear to admire what Industry is capable of doing, when 'tis supported by the Love of Liberty. A Country floating in the Water, a Land uncultivated, and which scarce produc'd any thing, is become, in a short time,

time, the Magazine and Centre of all the Riches in the World.

None but a People so laborious as the *Dutch*, could have, as it were, drawn their Country by Force out of the Sea, by the Dykes they have made; and none but a Nation so powerful as they, could support the Expence which those very Dykes cost them. They are oblig'd to be at infinite Care and Pains to maintain and keep them up, because the Safety of their Country depends on their being in good Repair. The Sea is indeed the Nurse of the *Dutch*; but then 'tis, on the other hand, the worst Enemy they have: For in the * Year 1574, the Sea wash'd away one hundred and twelve Houses from the Village of *Scheveling*, the Church of which is now near the Sea; whereas formerly it stood in the middle of the Village.

The Repairs which they are continually oblig'd to make, and the other Expences which the Government is put to, are the Reason that the Taxes are very heavy in *Holland*. They who know the State of Affairs, don't murmur at them; and in this Country one shall hardly meet with Malecontents, those odious and contemptible Creatures who seek to establish their Fortune upon the Ruins of a Government, and who found their Hopes in the future Troubles and Calamities of their Country, which they are always ready to distract. On the other hand, every Man being content with enjoying full Liberty, contributes with Pleasure to the Necessities of the State, and looks upon the Republic as a good Mother whom he is oblig'd to support.

All the fault I find with the *Dutch*, is a blind sort of Love they have for their Children, which hinders them from correcting them, and giving

* *Misson's Voyage to Holland.*

them a proper Education. I could wish they were not so complaisant in this respect. The *Lacedæmonians* train'd up their Youth after a different manner; for they inured them to a rigid Discipline, and form'd them betimes to all manner of Exercises. In short they inspired them with so great a Love to Virtue, and with so firm a Constancy that upon a certain Day there was one of them who, holding a Flambeau at a particular Ceremony, suffer'd it to burn his Hand rather than he would interrupt it *.

'Tis in the time of Youth that the Manners and first Inclinations ought to be formed. There are a thousand Faults which Age and Reason have much ado to suppress, when they are by Habit render'd common and familiar. 'Tis almost impossible to cure the *Italians* intirely of Superstition, because they have always some Faith remaining in a Number of Chimæras with which they have been fed from their Cradles. In like manner the *Dutch* find it very difficult to shake of a sort of Self-conceit and Fondness for their own Opinions, which is owing to the too great Complaisance of their Parents in gratifying all their silly Desires. However, People of Distinction seem desirous to take some Care of their Children's Education, but unluckily they never give them any but very bad Tutors.

One thing which no doubt will extremely surprise thee is, that a Nation of such Good-sense as

* *Cicero* speaking of the Resolution, Constancy and Courage of the *Lacedæmonian* Youth, says, That it often happen'd, that they would fight with one another till they died, rather than own they were beat: *Adolescentium Greges Lacedæmone vidimus ipsi; incredibili Contentione certantes, Pugnis, Calcibus, Unguibus, Morfu denique, ut exanimarentur, prius quam se victos faterentur. Cicero Tusculan. Quæst. lib. v. cap. 27.*

the *Dutch*, should scarce ever commit the first Education of their chief Youth to any but Monks stripp'd of their Order, and to little saucy Priests. A Neglect so unworthy of Commendation might be attended with terrible Inconveniencies, and a Repentance the more mortifying, because too late. What, sure ! are there no Natives of the Country fit to discharge an Employment of such Importance, and so worthy of the most serious Attention ? I can't persuade myself to be of that Opinion. But the Fondness of the Women for such as sham the Gentleman, and for *Petits Maitres*, and the too great Complaisance of their Husbands, make them generally prefer the Frivolous to the Solid, and that which is detrimental to that which is profitable. The Girls are, in this respect, much better taken care of than the Boys ; and the Women, to whose Care they are committed, are incomparably better qualified for the due Discharge of their Employment.

I shall soon depart from this Country, dear *Isaac*, for *Berlin*, and from thence I shall go to *Hamburg* ; where I have some Affairs of Consequence to settle with *Isaac Meis*. I shall make it my Business to inform thee of what I find most remarkable among the *Germans*, who are a People whom thou art better acquainted with than I am. The frequent Journies thou madest formerly to most of the Courts of *Germany*, have furnished thee with the Knowledge of certain Men and Things, which I cannot hope to acquire.

I shall be oblig'd to thee for telling me whether thou thinkest such Reflections as I shall communicate to thee to be just ; and shall reckon myself happy if my Letters may continue to please thee ; for which End I shall omit nothing in my Power. I read thine to several learned Men when I was in *France* ; and they seem'd very well pleas'd with them.

I know

I know that certain Bigots and Monks, who saw several of them, treated thee as an Heretic and an obstinate Jew. But thou needst not be in much Pain for their Approbation ; since what an antient Nazarene Doctor said of the Pagan Priests, may be apply'd to them, viz. *They who teach Wisdom, are not the same as they who are at the Head of Religion : The Philosophers don't shew the way to Heaven, nor the Priests that to Wisdom* *.

Farewell, dear Isaac ; live content, and be happy.



L E T T E R CXI.

From JACOB BRITO, at Madrid, to
AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam.

THE Women in Spain, dear Monceca, are the Prisoners of their Slaves ; for as there's no Country in the Word where the Men are more submissive to them ; so there are few Countries where the Women are under so much Constraint. Tho' Foreigners, who have for some time past sojourned in this Kingdom, have taken off a great deal of it, and chang'd that shocking Confinement into a genteeler sort of Slavery ; yet they are still watch'd very narrowly. Such of them as are of too mean Extraction to go to Court, scarce see any body but their Relations,

* Philosophia, et Religio Deorum, disjunctæ sunt, longeque differunt ; siquidem alii sunt Professores Sapientiae, per quos utique ad Deos aditur ; alique Religionis Antistites ; per quos sapere non dicitur. *Lactant. Divin. Institut. lib. iv. cap. iii. p. 227.*

and

and some Monks : But the others have more Liberty, especially since the Court of *Spain* has follow'd that of *France* in some of its Manners and Customs.

Tho' the Women are so strictly watch'd, thou must not think that the Honour of their Husbands is secure against the Stains which it often receives in other Countries. The Monks here are what the *Petits Maitres*, or *Beaux*, are in *France*. A *Corde-lier* is as dangerous a Person as the most amiable Person of Quality. He knows all the Expedients for captivating the Hearts of the Fair ; and his Habit gains him Admittance into all Families, to deceive the most jealous Husband. The specious Title of Confessor, or spiritual Guide, furnishes him with a Pretence to be *tête à tête* with his Mistress as long as he pleases ; and the Husband durst not interrupt their Conversation without running the risque of feeling the fatal Effects, not only of the Indignation of Heaven, but of that of the Monks too.

Thou wilt perhaps ask me, dear *Monceca*, how the jealous *Spaniards* can put up with these Monkish Visits ? I was as much surpris'd at it as thou canst be, till I perceiv'd that the Force of Prejudice was so great over the People of this Country, that their Jealousy truckled to their Superstition ; either from their being persuaded of the Virtue of the Monks that frequent their Houses, or from their Opinion, that the Cuckoldom for which they are oblig'd to those very Monks, is sacred and honourable, and a constituent Part of their Religion. Perhaps too, there's a certain Number of Indulgences, which are tack'd to the Horns of a Husband who is made a Cuckold by a Friar. If that be the Case, I no longer wonder that a poor *Spaniard* is so zealous as to gain them at the Expence of his Forehead when a *Spanish* Grandee guards a *Jew* to the Place of Ex-

ecution, and for that Purpose so demeans himself, as to be a Comrade of the *Familiars* of the Inquisition.

This is not the first Age wherein People have been known to receive Cuckoldom, when it came thro' the Canal of Religion, with great Marks of Veneration. Did not the Pagans think themselves very happy when some of their Gods took a Fancy to frolic it upon the Earth, and to plant Horns on certain Husbands Foreheads? This Frontlet they reckon'd as honourable as a Crown. *Amphitryon*, the *Theban* General, thought himself highly honour'd that *Jupiter* would make use of his Wife to form a Demi-god *. Perhaps a *Spanish* Votary is as well pleased to

* *Alcmena* wore three Moons on her Head-dress, to denote that *Jupiter* made one Night as long as three, that he might the longer enjoy her. ' This is something very odd, says a modern Author. It was enough for her surely that her Husband's Head was charg'd with such a Crest, and fortify'd with Horn-works and Half-moons enough to surpass the Towers of the Goddess *Cybele*.

——— *Qualis, Berecynthia Mater,
Invehitur Curru Phrygiæ turrata per Urbes* *.

-----When in Pomp she makes the *Phrygian* Round,
With Golden Turrets on her Temples crown'd. *Dryden*.

' What need then had she to bear three Moons on her
' Forehead ?'

——— *Parvoque Alcmena superbit
Hercule, tergemina Crinem circumdata Luna* †,
' With little *Hercules Alcmena* swells,
Her Head encompass'd with a Triple Moon.

Several Interpreters will have it, that these three Moons were the Signals of the three Nights that *Jupiter* spent with her. *Bayle's Hist. and Critic. Dict.* in the Article of *Amphitryon*.

* *Virg. Æneid. lib. vi. v. 185.*

† *Stat. Thebaid, lib. vi. v. 288.*

be the Bye-blow of some *Augustin* or *Cordelier* Friar, as a *Theban* was to be descended from a Pagan Deity.

Besides the Liberty which the Monks are indulg'd in, to go and converse with the Women, and the Respect which the Husbands bear to them, the Expedients which they make use of to conceal their Intrigues, their Knavery, and their Hypocrisy, are of very great Service to them. There's not a bad Step they take in Gallantry, but they bring themselves cleverly off; for they so well know how to disguise their Actions, that many People are persuaded they are as chaste as *Origen*; tho' the same Reason does not restrain them.

I was told a Story of a *Carmelite*, which I thought a very merry one. This Friar had an Amour at *Seville*, with a very pretty young Woman, whose Husband being gone on a Journey, the Reverend Father Director did not fail to pay a Visit to the Fair one every Morning. The Exhortations he gave her were much more agreeable to the Laws of Love than to those of *Hymen*; and that he might be the better understood by his Patient, he lay in the same Bed with her; where he commonly pass'd, at least, two or three Hours at a time.

But one Day as he was using this Freedom with his Mistress, who should come in but the Husband! The *Carmelite* was so surpris'd, that he had but just time to put on his Gown, and left his Breeches. The Husband happen'd not to be of the Temper of those who think Monkish Cuckoldom an effectual Means for the Remission of Sins. While the Monk was thus hurrying on his Habit, the Man perceiv'd the Breeches; and snatching in a Rage at the dumb, but convincing Testimonials, he shut them up in a Chest, and ran to the Convent, to carry his Complaint to his Superior: 'I will this Minute, *said he*

‘ to him, go and shew Father *Sebastiano*’s Breeches to the whole City, if you don’t make me proper and speedy Satisfaction. I promise you I will, said the Superior to him, very gravely ; but it is necessary that I should speak first to the Father of whom you complain ; for I can’t condemn him unheard ; ’tis but Equity that I should hear both Parties : Therefore go your Ways home ; and if you have Justice on your side, you shall have Satisfaction.’

The *Spaniard* had no sooner left the Superior, but Father *Sebastiano* return’d to the Convent. It was to no Purpose for him to deny the Fact ; for the Loss of his Breeches was an evident Token of his Crime. The Superior a crafty Man, perceiving the Danger of leaving such convincing Proofs of the Incontinency of one of his Friars in the Hands of the jealous *Spaniard*, resolv’d to have the fatal Breeches again forthwith. *Don’t be so lecherous for the future*, said he to Father *Sebastiano*, *nor so delicate, as to put yourself in a Pair of Sheets.* ’Tis unworthy of a Carmelite to have recourse to such Means.

After he had ended this short Remonstrance, he order’d the whole Convent to march in Procession, to the Husband’s House. They obey’d, and follow’d him singing their Litanies. The *Spaniard*, very much surpriz’d at the Arrival of all those reverend Fathers, could not conceive what was the Meaning of so much Ceremony ; but it was not long before he was acquainted with it. *We are come*, said the Superior to him, *to let you see your Mistake, and to fetch one of the most precious Relics of our Convent, which Father Sebastiano took from the Sacristy, or Vestry, without my Order.*

The *Spaniard* did not understand one Word of what was said to him ; nor could he guess what Relic they meant. His Passion had prevented him from

from seeing his Wife since he returned from the Convent ; and he was very far from suspecting what a Trick they were going to play him. ' The Breeches, *continued the Superior*, which you have shut up in your Chest, and which are the Cause of your Mistake, are the same that were worn by the blessed St. *Raymond de Penafort*. Father *Sebastiano* only brought them from the Convent, that your Wife might salute them : For of all Relics, 'tis the greatest Specific for Women that pray to Heaven for Children.' At these Words the *Spaniard*, out of his Respect for the sacred Breeches, or rather out of Madness, to find himself imposed upon without daring to complain, or to take Satisfaction, prostrated himself before the Relic, and cry'd out with a loud Voice ; ' O holy Breeches ! from which we have all the Reason that can be to expect a Posterity as numerous as the Stars in the Firmament, or as the Sand of the Sea ; forgive my Blindness, and take Pity of my Ignorance ! I did not know that thou who hadst heretofore provided for the Infirmities of a great Saint, didst vouchsafe at this time so graciously to supply the pressing Demands of our Wives. May all the Wives of this City immediately experience thy powerful Assistance as effectually as mine has.'

The Superior, charm'd with a Homage and Prayer which gave so much Credit to his Brethren, and with the blessed Success of his Monkish Stratagem, carry'd back St. *Raymond's* Breeches in Triumph to his Convent : And the superstitious *Spaniards*, fully convinc'd of their wonderful Efficacy, have ever since paid particular Devotion to them*.

* I have been assur'd, that such an Adventure happen'd once in *France*, only it concern'd a Jesuit ; and his Breeches were canonized by the Name of St. *Anthony*.

There are few Cafes, dear *Monceca*, wherein the *Nazarene* Monks don't make Religion a Cloak to cover their Irregularities. Not that they trouble their Heads about falving Appearances, or avoiding Scandal. The Fear of forfeiting the good Opinion which the Husbands have conceiv'd of them, is the only thing that puts them under a Constraint. They conceal the Wickedness they commit, not because they are asham'd of it, but that they may commit it with the more Ease : And it must be confess'd, that nobody excels them in the Art of Dissimulation.

A famous *Italian* Preacher * made excellent Sermons at *Rome* ; but when he came down from the Pulpit, his Practice was to go and divert himself with the kind Lasses. Nobody would have thought of correcting him for his Intemperance, if he had not had a Number of very formidable Enemies, who were resolv'd to be reveng'd on him for certain bold Invectives with which he lash'd them in his public Discourses. One Day as he was preaching at *St. John de Lateran's*, ' My dear Brethren, said he, I have
' no Notion of those Men who boast themselves
' to be of the Society of *Jesus*. When he was born,
' he had no other Companions but an Ox and an
' Ass. He spent his Life with Scribes and Pharisees,
' whom he could never convert ; and at last he dy'd
' between two Thieves. Therefore, dear Brethren,
' for God's sake, tell me, From which of these three
' Classes are those deriv'd, that call themselves *The*
' *Society of Jesus* † ?'

So

* *Fontana Rosa*. He was a *Dominican*, and a great Enemy of the Jesuits.

† *Fratelli carissimi*, non so, disse, chi siano costoro, che si pregiano di esser i Compagni di Giesù. All'ora che nacque,

So severe a Jest as this was, turn'd the Hatred of the Jesuits upon the Preacher : They swore they would be even with him ; and having Intelligence that, every now and then he frequented certain Houses, where 'twas impossible for him to compose his Sermons ; they obtain'd an order from the Governor of *Rome* to the Barigel to arrest the Preacher, and to carry him to Prison, when he caught him with his Whores.

The Jesuits kept a strict Watch upon him ; and no sooner was their Enemy gone out upon the Rake, than they inform'd the Barigel of it ; who enter'd the House, and knock'd at the Chamber-door : But the Reverend Father, instead of opening it, began to talk aloud, as if he did not hear or mind who was at the Door. The Barigel, tir'd with waiting, burst open the Door with his Foot, and enter'd the Chamber with his Archers. But how was he surpris'd ! For he found the Monk with a Chaplet in his Hand, at the End of which there hung above two hundred Medals, and the Priestesses of *Venus* kneeling at his Feet, modestly attending to a Sermon that was preaching to her by the fly Monk, and saying to him, with a Flood of Tears ; *Indeed, Father, I will, for the time to come, reform my Course of Life ; and nothing shall engage me to continue a Behaviour which I confess to be so bad.*

The Barigel and his Archers, not a whit less superstitious than all the *Italians* are, cry'd out ; *Is it not a Shame that good Men should be accus'd in this*

nacque, non hebbe altri Compagni che un Bue ed un Asino. Passo la Vita trà Farisei e Scribi, i quali mai vollero convertirsi. Mori alla fine in mezzo à due Ladri. Dite-mi, di grazia, Fratelli cari, la Compagnia di Giesù d'oggi di da quel di queste tre Compagnie deriva? Sig. Cant. de Quom. Tom. I. p. 130.

manner ? The Monk perceiving that now was the Time to play his Enemies that Trick which they intended to put upon him, did not think it enough to have held forth to his Mistress, but he gave so pathetic an Exhortation to the Barigel, that instead of thinking how he should put the Orders which he had received in Execution, he went and acquainted the Governor of *Rome* with the holy and pious Actions of which he had just been an Eye-witness. The Jesuits were mortify'd and asham'd, and the Preacher was more followed than ever. He was permitted to convert as many Whores as he thought fit, to closet himself with them, *tête à tête*, in order to talk to them with the more Freedom, and even to strip off his Habit, if he pleas'd, or if he thought it might conduce to the Multiplication of his Converts. The Jesuits complain'd of the Privileges granted to their Enemy ; but all the Answer they had, was, That it was no more than what was taught by the *Spanish* Divines ; and that their Fathers, *Escobar*, *Sanches*, *Suarez*, and many others, had often decided those Points *.

I know not, dear *Monceca*, what thou wilt think of this Stratagem of the *Italian* Preacher : But in this Country there happen every Day fifty Scenes still more comical ; and the *Italian* Monks are Saints, compar'd with the *Spaniards*.

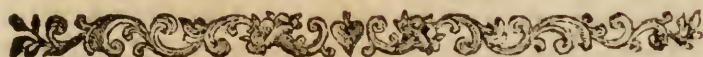
Nevertheless, whatever Conveniency a Woman finds in an Intrigue with a Monk, and be the Friars ever so much in Vogue here ; yet a certain Instinct, born with the Fair Sex, is the Reason that they are never

* See the Provincial Letters, p. 101. Also the Parallel of the Doctrine of the Pagans and the Jesuits : Translated into *English*, and dedicated to the Right Reverend Father in God Dr. *Benjamin Hoadley*, now Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

admitted but when a Woman is at a Loss where to find a Gentleman for her Gallant. When this is the Case, she throws herself into the Arms of the Friars ; and this is commonly owing to nothing but the Constraint she is put under.

The Ceremony of making Love by Monks and by Gentlemen, is very different. The former enter Houses, and often turn the Husbands out. The Gentlemen, on the contrary, dance Attendance in the Street, playing upon the Guittar under their Mistresses Windows. Of the latter I will give thee a fuller Account another time.

Farewell, dear *Aaron* ; and bless thy Stars that thou art in a Country where there are no Monks, and no Inquisition.



L E T T E R CXII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam,
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt,
who was formerly a Rabbi at Constanti-
nople.*

THE present State of the *Nazarene* Religion often makes me think, dear *Isaac*, what it will come to 4 or 500 Years hence, it being certain, that in so long a Course of Time some great Revolution must happen, which will intirely change the Face of it.

Nazarenism may be look'd upon at present as a Republic, distracted by two different Factions, which can never be at Peace with one another ; for

the one or the other must necessarily get the upper Hand, and suppress its Rival. The *Roman Pontiff's* Friends, and their Adversaries, labour with the same Passion to accomplish their Designs; and 'tis impossible but some favourable Conjunction and Opportunity will happen, which the one of the two Parties will improve to the Ruin of the other.

When one considers with what Rapidity the Reformed extended their Power at the Beginning of the Separation of the *Nazarenes*, and what a Number of Kingdoms and Provinces have embrac'd the Sentiments of the Protestant Doctors, one would be ready to think, that by little and little they would become absolute Masters. But if we cast our Eyes upon the Events that have happen'd in *Europe* for this hundred Years past, one knows not what to think. The more one seeks to attain to a Certainty in these Matters, the more uncertain we are, and Reflections only serve to breed new Doubts. Many good and bad Turns of Success have happen'd, alternately, to the Protestants and Papists. In the Beginning of the last Century near one half of *France* was Protestant: And now *Calvinism* is intirely banish'd from it, which is a considerable Gain to the *Partisans* of the Pontiff; but what they have got on their own Side of the Water they have lost beyond Sea. The *English* have intirely banish'd Popery, and will shortly suppress it in the two Kingdoms that are subject to them*. 'Tis my Opinion that the Injury the two Parties have done to one another is pretty equal, tho' the Advantage does not appear so equal in *Germany*, where the Protestants seem to have met with a considerable Shock, the Consequences of which may be very pernicious to them, by the *Saxon* Electors

* *Scotland and Ireland.*

changing their Religion, and their returning to the *Romish* Communion. They have introduc'd the Sentiments of the Papiſts into their Government and their Court. They have, as one may ſay, laid the Axe to the Root of the Tree, and it muſt fall. For, in fine, dear *Iſaac*, 'tis a Fact which has been demonſtrably prov'd true by Experience, that when a Succeſſion of Sovereigns continue in the Profeſſion of the ſame Religion, all their Subjects, ſooner or later, embrace its Opinions. In *Sweden* and in *Denmark*, where the Kings have exerciſed the Proteſtant Religion without Interruption, there are ſcarce any Catholics now to be found; and there would have been as few of them in *England*, if, after the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, there had been no Popiſh Prince on the Throne. But *James* the Firſt, and his Son, rekindled a Fire that was ready to go out.

If *Lewis XIII.* and *Lewis XIV.* had been as zealous to deſtroy Popery, as they were to ruin the Proteſtant Religion, the Number of the Reformed in *France*, would have been much greater than that of the Catholics, and perhaps there would not have been a ſingle Nobleman remaining at Court in the Intereſt of the ſovereign Pontiff. 'Tis impoſſible but, in the Courſe of four Generations, there will ariſe, in all Families, ſome Head or other of it, that will ſacrifice the Faith of his Anceſtors to his Ambition. If the Grandfather does not change, the Father does; if not the Father, the Son does, or the Son's Succeſſor. 'Tis undoubtedly a very great Complaiſance to Mankind to think that there is only one out of four that is capable of committing Folly, for the ſake of procuring them great Wealth and Honours. All the Philoſophers own that Men are in general more prone to Vice than Virtue. But ſuppoſing them to be much more firm and ſtable than

they are, it will always follow, that in the Course of four Generations there must be some Chief or Head in every Family, that will act solely from the Views of Ambition and Policy. ‘ My Prince, *he will say*, believes in the Virtue of Indulgences. ‘ And after all is said and done, where is the Harm ‘ if I approve of the Use of those Indulgences? I ‘ must be a very stupid Fool not to be of the Religion of the Sovereign, because that’s the Road to ‘ a Fortune. Shall I be very happy, if, by continuing a Protestant, I have the Satisfaction to ‘ condemn *Fooleries*, which, if I do, will be nevertheless approv’d? Is it not better that I should ‘ cunningly make use of those *Fooleries* to attain to ‘ my own Ends? *Henry IV*, who was born to wear ‘ a Crown, said, *A Kingdom was worth a Mass at any time*. As for my Part, I, who am only born ‘ to attain to the Honours set apart for Nobility, do ‘ affirm, that a Regiment is worth all the spiritual ‘ Tid-bits of the *Romish* Faith, whether by Wholesale or Retail.’

A Duke and a Peer is as easy to be tempted as a private Gentleman. There needs nothing more than to flatter him with the Hopes of obtaining a Place that may give fresh Lustre to his Rank. How few Courtiers would there be at *Versailles*, whose Faith could be steady against the Prospect of the Staff of a Marshal of *France*?

In order to be fully convinc’d, that the Religion of a Prince, sooner or later, absorbs all others, one need only consider how many illustrious Families that profess’d Protestantism in *France*, in the Reign of *Henry IV*. as the *Rohans*, the *Bouillons*, the *la Forces*, the *Gondrins*, and several others, are since relaps’d into the Catholic Religion. Is this Change owing to the Power of Grace? A *Jansenist* Parson may be prejudic’d enough to believe so; but a
Jesuit

Jesuit will reason upon it more justly. He will, by Word of Mouth, indeed, ascribe to Heaven what his Heart tells him is owing to Policy. He too well knows the secret Springs of Politics, to be impos'd upon by the sudden Conversions that were made at Court, in the Reigns of *Lewis XIII.* and *Lewis XIV.*

The Protestants, dear *Isaac*, are as ambitious as the Papists, and by Consequence as subject to change, for the sake of feeding their Vanity. As in *France* there is no Protestant Family of Distinction remaining, so neither in *Sweden* nor in *Denmark* is there any to be found that is Catholic. The Religion of the Sovereign has operated equally in these different Kingdoms, and it will every where produce the same Effect.

The Protestants cannot but look upon the Election of *Augustus* to the Kingdom of *Poland* as a fatal Stroke, because it has introduc'd Opinions into that Prince's Territories, which, sooner or later, will acquire the same Credit there as in other Catholic Countries. 'Tis almost impossible but some Day or other an Elector of *Saxony* will arise so zealous for Religion, that he will endeavour to give the finishing Blow to the Protestant Faith. I consider the Prince that now reigns in *Saxony*, in the same Light as *Henry IV.*, with regard to Religion; and his Son, perhaps, will resemble *Lewis XIII.*, and his Grandson *Lewis XIV.*, which if they should, what will become of the Reformed Religion? Before the fourth Generation, it will have suffer'd the same Fate in this Part of *Germany* as it hath met with in the *Palatinate*, and in the Bishopric of *Spire*.

By the several Losses which the Protestants have sustain'd for some time in *Germany*, and which I don't find counterbalanc'd by any unfortunate Accident

cident which has happen'd to the Papists, it seems, dear *Isaac*, as if the latter may, by Degrees, get the Upperhand, and regain the whole, or at least a great part of all that they have lost. They once had in their Power a very useful and a very certain Method to attain to it ; but State-policy, and the Interest of the Princes, did not permit them to put it in Practice. If the Court of *Vienna* had but chose a Husband for the eldest Archduchess, out of the Protestant Princes, there is not one of 'em but what would have said, *That the Kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, and the Dominions of Austria and Silesia, were worth all the high Masses that ever were, or ever will be sung.* Suppose now, dear *Isaac*, that the Prince Royal of *Prussia* had but been in Possession of what the Duke of *Lorrain* has obtain'd, the Catholic Religion would have been restor'd in *Prussia* and in *Brandenbourg*, where it would have become the Religion of the State, the Path to Honours, and by Consequence, the Religion, which would have been quickly embrac'd by the Courtiers, by all Persons of Ambition, and, before the fourth Generation, by every Family of Distinction.

While I am writing to thee, dear *Monceca*, a very odd Thought is come into my Head. If the Papists knew how to make a cunning Use of their Advantages, with only the Kingdom of *Poland* they might, in less than 200 Years, render all the Courts in *Germany* submissive to the Orders of the *Roman Pontiff*. They need do no more for this Purpose than to render that Elective State the Inheritance of some Protestant Prince that should turn Catholic. After having gain'd *Saxony*, the Crown should be offer'd to the King of *Denmark* ; and when he is dead, they should elect the King of *Sweden*. Thus, in the Space of a couple of Centuries, it would appear, that *Poland* would be worth, in Church Coin, seven

or eight times more than *France* is worth; *Henry IV.* having rated his Kingdom at no higher Value than a single Mass.

'Tis certain, that in the Elections of the Empire, and of *Poland*, the Papists have too great Opportunities to aggrandize themselves, which, sooner or later, they will make use of to Advantage. They have already found the Benefit of the first. Why should they not hereafter make use of the second? What does not happen in two Centuries, may come about in three. Fifty Years ago it would have been taken as a wild Prophecy, if a Man should have asserted that *Saxony* would be soon govern'd by a Catholic Prince, and *Poland* by an Elector, who was but a little while before a Protestant. In our Days we have seen all these Events. We actually look upon it as an improbable thing, to suppose that a King of *Prussia* will be a Papist and an Emperor; but our Great-Grandchildren will not perhaps be surpriz'd at it.

The Reformed have not the same Advantages as their Adversaries. They have not one Elective Kingdom among them; nor can they hope to bring any Sovereign into their Party by the View of possessing a second Crown. All they can do is to secure to themselves the peaceable Possession of certain Dominions, which can have nothing to do with the Elections of Sovereigns. *Holland*, the *Swiss* Cantons, the Imperial Protestant Cities, will never be in the Circumstance of Kingdoms govern'd by Princes. But what's so small a Tract of Country compar'd to that which is possess'd by so many Protestant Kings, who may be tempted, by the Offer of a Crown, to embrace the Catholic Religion?

All these Reasons convince me, dear *Isaac*, that notwithstanding the amazing Progress which the
Pro-

Protestant Religion made in its Beginning, it may hereafter, by Degrees, lose all its Advantages, and be reduced to a very low Ebb. The Detriment which it has suffer'd in *France* and *Germany*, seems to me to be greater than that which has been done to Popery in *England*. The Change of the Religion of the Electors of *Saxony* turns the Scale on the Side of the Catholics; and I don't see how their Adversaries can repair this Shock. 'Tis true that they are still very powerful; but in short, there are certain Conjunctions, when all the Power of Men is of no Avail. If it should but happen that one Sovereign in the North should change his Religion, the Affairs of the Protestant Religion in *Germany* would be in a very bad State. Perhaps this may not happen; I grant it. In this Case, the Reformed would still be in a Condition to make Head against their Enemies. Perhaps, on the other Hand, there may be such a Change; the Consequence of which would be, that the Papists will intirely gain the Ascendant.

I think, therefore, dear *Isaac*, that I may well observe to thee, that Reflections on what may be the State of the *Nazarene* Religion, in three or four Centuries, are only productive of Doubts. 'Tis Time alone that must clear up so impenetrable a Mystery. Who knows whether, two hundred Years hence, *France*, instead of thinking how to protect the *Roman* Pontiff, will not oppose him, and entertain Opinions different from those of the Papists, and those of the Reformed too? Who can foretel whether some new Opinion may not be in Vogue? The Disputes that arise every Day among the Popish Divines are of the same Service to the Protestant, as the Ambition of obtaining an Elective Kingdom is to the Catholic Religion. Nature has not forgot how she form'd
the

the Brains of the first Reformers. She has nothing to do but at certain Conjunctions to produce so great a Genius in *France* as *Calvin's* was, who would do more Damage to Popery than the Conversion of two Protestant Princes could repair.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and live content and happy.



L E T T E R CXIII.

From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, now at Cairo, to AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam.

THIS, dear *Monceca*, is in Answer to thy Letter, on the Uncertainty of the future State of *Nazarenism*. 'Tis highly probable that before two Centuries are run out, very considerable Changes will happen in the Sects of that Religion; but 'tis my Opinion that Popery has more Reason to apprehend some dangerous Revolution than Protestantism. Thou seem'st to me to think the contrary; but, if thou dost advert to my Reasons, I fancy thou wilt alter thy Opinion, and plainly see, that the Credit of the *Roman* Pontiffs has not gain'd Ground in *Europe* for this hundred Years past; but that, on the contrary, it has sunk considerably; and that the Court of *Rome* has less Power now, than it had a little after the Reformation.

The Exile of the *French* Protestants is not an Equivalent for the total Destruction of the Catholics in *England*. The Kings of *France* never were Pro-

Protestants; therefore, according to thy own Principles, thou wilt confess to me, that Protestantism in their Government could not be consider'd as a Religion that was like to make any great Progress there in future Times, since that of the Prince must at the long Run absorb and destroy all the others. The Reformed, after the Death of *Henry IV.* might well have foreseen what they were to expect. Was it possible they could hold out long against Enemies that were supported by the Credit and Power of the Sovereign? The *English* Catholics, on the contrary, had all the Reason in the World to hope for happy Times. After the Reigns of several Protestant Princes a Popish Prince was plac'd upon the Throne, which was such a Master-piece of State Policy in their Favour, that what might not they have hop'd for in Process of Time? But Matters took a sudden Turn; for the Prince on whom they founded their Hopes was oblig'd to abandon his Kingdom, and his Subjects gave a Sanction to his Exile, by an authentic Act, by which all Princes that adher'd to the Faith of the *Roman* Pontiff, were for ever excluded from the Crown of *England*. Consider, dear *Monceca*, how much Popery has suffer'd more than Protestantism in these different Revolutions. The Reformed were banish'd out of a Country where the Prince on the Throne was against them; and where, for a long time, their Privileges had been intirely suppress'd. The Catholics were proscrib'd in three Kingdoms where the Sovereign protected them, where they hop'd to bear Sway by his Credit, and where every thing seem'd to concur, to grant them their most sanguine Expectations. Besides, by the Banishment of the *French* Protestants, Popery was not secur'd against the Attacks of some new Adversaries; whereas the Reformed of *England* have rais'd invincible Barriers

against

against the Attacks of the Court of *Rome*. If a new Sect starts up at *London*, either among the Presbyterians, or in the Church of *England*, it will never aim at the Destruction of the Protestant in favour of the Popish Religion. But, if any novel Doctrine should come to be establish'd in *France*, it will always tend to the Destruction of the Authority of the *Roman Pontiffs*. Experience shews this to be true. The *Jansenists* have succeeded in the Place of the Protestants; and, sooner or later, they will come to have as great Disputes with the Court of *Rome* as the first Reformers had.

Consider, dear *Aaron*, that every new Sect which shall happen to start up hereafter must tend to the Destruction of Popery, and can do no Prejudice to Protestantism. Fifty Years ago, or more, all the *Dutch Catholics* had but one Faith; but now, they are divided into *Molinists* and *Jansenists*, by which Separation Popery has suffer'd very much, while Protestantism has in some measure been a Gainer,

Thou wilt say, perhaps, dear *Monceca*, that the Protestants are subject to the same Inconveniences as their Adversaries; and, that the new Opinions which find a Number of Adherents among them, become very hurtful to them, because they diminish the Number of such as stick to the fundamental Articles of Protestantism. But to this I answer, that the Sects which arise in the Protestant Religion do it but little Harm, because they are all agreed to stand up, and preach for the utter Destruction of Popery. Instead of aiming to persecute one another, they are attentive in the Pursuit of Ways and Means to hurt the common Enemy. The Disciples of *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Menno* and *Arminius* are equally engaged in the same Designs, and pursue, tho' by various Ways, the same End. When the Business in Hand is to give a Blow to Popery, they unite together. The
Hatred.

Hatred of the *Roman* Pontiff is the Knot and Cement of the several *Nazarene* Sects; but when any new one starts up in the Popish Religion, it immediately falls in with the Sentiments of the others, so far as they tend to humbling the Court of *Rome*.

The extravagant Conduct of the Catholic Priests and Doctors gives great Advantage likewise to the Protestants, and sooner or later will prove the intire Ruin of Popery. When any Divisions are form'd in the *Romish* Religion, the Pontiff immediately cuts off those from his Communion whose Opinions he does not like. There are few Ages in which there are not such Separations. The Branches thus cut and torn off, make the Tree less; and by Degrees nothing will be left but the Trunk, half rotten and incapable to shoot out new Sprigs. The Protestants act after a manner much more wise and prudent. They don't persecute the Sects that are form'd among them, but content themselves with not approving them; and by such Moderation they hinder them from carrying Things to those Extremities, into which Popery, by its Cruelties, drives all those that arise in the Pale of its Church.

Those, dear *Monceca*, are my Reasons for believing that Protestantism has not so much Cause as Popery to fear the being destroy'd in Process of Time. 'Tis true, that the Objection which thou hast rais'd from the Conversion of the Protestant Princes to the *Romish* Communion, seems to counterbalance them. But if thou dost only run over the present State of the Affairs of *Europe*, thou wilt see that this Advantage of the Catholics is not so considerable as that which the Reformed may reap at some time or other from the Victories of one single Prince, an Enemy to the *Roman* Pontiff. Thou supposest, that by one *Election* only to the Crown of *Poland*, in the Space of a hundred Years, three different

different Monarchs may be drawn into the *Romish* Religion. I own that possibly this may be brought about. But who can give thee the same Assurance, that some Ages hence all *Poland* will not be Protestant? Thou must not think it extraordinary, if I believe that 'tis possible for the Authority of the *Roman* Pontiff to be entirely destroy'd by that time. 'Tis not much above 20 Years ago that this same *Poland*, from whence thou dost now presage so much Advantage to the Papists, had like to have become *Lutheran*: And it might have been so at this Day, had it not been for the vast Ambition, and the mistaken Politics of *Charles XII.* King of *Sweden*; who, after having made himself Master of it, so as to be able to reduce it to a Province, and join it to his other Dominions, chose rather to venture a Battle at *Pultowa*, and to lose the Conquests of several Years in one Day, than to secure to himself the peaceable Possession of the Dominions which he had subdued. The absurd Passion which that Prince had to imitate *Alexander*, and to make Kings after his Example, made him place *Stanislaus* on the Throne of *Poland*. The Papists are therefore only oblig'd to the Folly of a Protestant Prince for the Preservation of that Crown. A Politician of these later Times owns this Truth, though he excuses *Charles* the Twelfth, and extols his Disinterestedness and Magnanimity in yielding up a Kingdom which belong'd to him by Right of Conquest. ' When Count *Piper*, says this Author *. ' saw *Charles* the Master of *Poland*, he propos'd to ' him to keep it for him . . . and after the Example ' of *Gustavus Vasa*, to render it *Lutheran*. His ' View to indemnify himself for his Expences, to

* The Political Works of the Abbé de St. Pierre, Tom. ix. p. 35.

‘aggrandize his Kingdom, to extend his Religion,
 ‘and to be reveng’d on the Pope whose Dominions
 ‘he hated, made him hesitate a Moment. But
 ‘when he came to consider that he had declar’d to
 ‘the *Poles*, that he had no Design against their Na-
 ‘tion, and that all he wanted of ’em was to drive
 ‘out King *Augustus*, and to elect another King,
 ‘*I will have no Kingdom*, said he, *which I cannot*
 ‘*keep to myself without Breach of my Promise;*
 ‘*and, upon this Occasion, ’tis more honourable to*
 ‘*give a Crown than to keep it.* I question whether
 ‘the *Czar* ever entertain’d so noble a Sentiment,
 ‘to have the Honour of keeping his Promise upon
 ‘such Terms.’

Without considering, dear *Monceca*, whether this
 Author had Reason to commend the Disinterested-
 ness of *Charles XII.* I will make use of his last Words,
 in Proof of another Advantage which the Enemies
 of the *Roman Pontiff* may one Day gain over their
 Adversaries. He frankly owns that if the *Czar*
 had been as much Master of *Poland*, as *Charles XII.*
 was, he would not have scrupled to keep it for him-
 self, and would have join’d it to the other Provinces
 of *Muscovy*. Who knows what may happen in a
 few Ages? We already see that the *Muscovites* give
 Kings to the *Poles*. Why will they not think it pro-
 per hereafter to subdue them intirely? The Power
 of the *Muscovites* will sooner or later do considerable
 Prejudice to Popery, in the Dominions that border
 upon them. It cannot be deny’d, that all the
 Conquests they make increase the Power of a
 Nation, which is a mortal Enemy to the Court of
Rome. The Hatred of the Protestants is slight, com-
 par’d with that of the *Nazarenes* of the *Greek*
 Faith. The *Muscovites* already give Marks of their
 Antipathy to the *Roman Pontiff*. The *Czarina* vi-
 gorously solicits the Emperor in favour of the Re-
 formed

formed *Hungarians*, and in Policy he should not refuse her what she demands. The Reformed have, on a sudden, acquired powerful Friends in the North. Forty Years ago, the *Muscovites* seem'd to be as insignificant, and as much out of the Question, in the Disputes betwixt the Catholics and the Protestants, as the Quakers are at this Day. Who can foresee what new Accidents may give other Allies to the Reformed? They are sure, that the Ambition and Tyranny of the Court of *Rome* will conduce to raise them Friends, and even in their own Pale. What an illustrious Poet has said of antient *Rome*, may be applied to the modern City.

——— *Ce n'est point au Bout de l'Univers
Que Rome fait sentir tout le Poids de ses Fers :
Et, de près inspirant les Haines les plus fortes,
Tes plus fiers Ennemis, Rome, sont à tes portes **.

'Tis my Opinion, that the *Venetians* may be rank'd among those secret Enemies, who only preserve a Decorum out of Policy. How many other People are there, who submitting in Appearance to the *Roman* Pontiff, are always on the Watch to guard against his Incroachments? They dissemble, because they think it for their Interest. But if this Interest should cease, if it should take a new Turn, with what Joy would not they intirely shake off a Yoke, which for so long a time has seem'd insupportable to them?

'Tis not only by indirect Means, and without knowing it, that the Court of *Rome* helps to propagate the Protestant Religion, but it sometimes lends Assistance to it voluntarily. The personal Interests of the Pontiffs sometimes prevail over the Obligations and Duties of their Rank. Several of them have publicly favour'd the Reformed. *Innocent XI.*

* *Racine*, in the Tragedy of *Mithridates*, Act III.

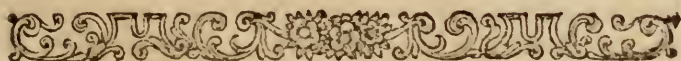
was

was partly the Cause of the abolishing of Popery in *England*, and of the Banishment of King *James*. If two or three Pontiffs were acted by the same domestic and political Interests as he was, what would become of Popery, if the Protestants at the same time made an artful Improvement of their Advantages? They honestly own the Advantages which the Hatred of *Innocent XI.* to the *French* procured them. ‘The King, says an Author of their Communion *, wrote a Letter to the Cardinal *d’Etrees*, which was communicated to the Cardinals, wherein he complain’d of this Pope’s Conduct, and took particular Notice of the Prejudice which *Europe* and the Church might suffer by what the Pope had done against the Cardinal *de Furstemberg*. To this Partiality he ascrib’d the Measures that were form’d against King *James*, in favour of the Protestant Religion, &c. This Letter, when made public in *Rome*, was perhaps, another Motive to induce the Pope to favour Prince *Clement* of *Bavaria* more and more, in Prejudice of the Cardinal *de Furstemberg*. But by the Exclusion of his Eminence, he took a hundred-fold Revenge, for all the Affronts which he might have receiv’d. He depriv’d the King of *France* of the Advantage of being the Arbiter of Peace and War, and engag’d him in a necessary War with almost all *Europe*. He quickly saw the Effect of this Conduct; and, tho’ he did not long survive his taking such a dreadful Revenge, yet he liv’d long enough to have the Joy of seeing *France* attack’d by so many Enemies, that it was generally believ’d, she must have sunk as into an Abyss the very first Campaign.’

* *Bayle’s Historical Dictionary* : The Article of *Innocent XI.*

After thou hast reflected, dear *Monceca*, on the Conduct of *Innocent XI.* examine that of *Sixtus Quintus*, who publicly favour'd the Interests of *Henry IV.* and *Elizabeth*, to the Prejudice of those of *Philip II.* and thou wilt be convinc'd that 'tis not impossible for the Protestants to obtain powerful Help, from the *Roman Pontiffs*, for their Preservation and even Aggrandisement.

Farewell, dear *Monceca* ; live content and happy ; and let me hear from thee.



L E T T E R CXIV.

From ISAAC ONIS, at Cairo, to AARON MONCECA, at Amsterdam.

SINCE my last, dear *Monceca*, I have made some new Reflections upon the Changes that may possibly happen in *Nazarenism* ; and I think that I have discover'd new Reasons which very much favour my Opinion. The Love that the Laity have for the Sciences, the Contempt into which the Philosophy of the Schools is fallen, as well as the Orders of the Monks, who were formerly the only Keepers of Books and MSS. all these Things concur unanimously to the Destruction of the Credit of the Court of *Rome*.

'Twas by the Favour of Ignorance and Superstition that the *Roman Pontiffs* establish'd their Power. The blind People respectfully kiss'd the Chains that were put upon them. But now the Return of the Sciences has taken off the Bondage, and the Truth

appears again with Lustre. The Laity, having seen the Folly of their Fathers, will not be, as they were, the Bubbles of Ecclesiastic and Monkish Jugglers. The first Instant wherein Ignorance began to lose its Prerogatives, ought to be look'd upon as the fatal Moment, wherein it was decreed by Heaven that the Court of *Rome* should be humbled. Since the Laity have made use of the Talents which the Divine Being bestows upon all Mankind, and since they have been convinc'd, that as the Understanding is the most glorious Appanage of the human Nature, 'twas preferring the State of Beasts to that of Men, not to cultivate the Sciences ; Superstition, the Power of the Pontiffs, and the Tricks of their Tools, lose Credit every Day. Men, being prejudic'd against the Stratagems that were formerly made use of to deceive them, can no longer be so easily led by the Nose. Before they can swallow an Oath, they must have time to chew it ; and it often happens that they reject it as contrary to Reason, and the Rules of Equity. In former Ages a Pontiff gave a Sanction to all his Passions by covering them with the Veil of Religion ; and the People look'd upon them as the Effects of a pious Zeal. *Hildebrand* oblig'd the Emperor *Henry IV.* to appear before him after a Week of Fasting and Imprisonment, in the humble Attitude of a Malefactor. But now a-days we see that the Writings of a Pontiff, which contain any thing injurious to the Persons or the Memory of Sovereigns, are stigmatiz'd and condemn'd to the Flames.

Thou must observe, dear *Monceca*, that the Ruin of the Power of the Court of *Rome* advances slower or faster, according as the Sciences have been more or less cultivated by the Laity. In former Times, when some began already to be distinguish'd by their Learning, *Beniface VIII.* would fain have imitated

Hilde-

Hildebrand, but he miscarry'd in his Projects. *Philip* the Fair mortify'd him upon sundry Occasions, and made his Embassador insult him on the Pontifical Throne. When Learning gain'd fresh Vigor under *Francis I.* and all *Europe* began to cultivate it, the Emperor *Charles V.* added Contempt to Insult ; for he order'd Prayers to God throughout his Dominions for the Deliverance of a Pope, at the same time that he kept him Prisoner in the Castle of *St. Angelo*. At last, *Lewis XIV.* carry'd Matters further than any other Monarch ; he caus'd a lasting Monument to be set up in the Middle of *Rome*, of his Contempt of the *Roman* Pontiffs ; and by erecting a Pyramid, he reveng'd the many Insults made upon the Honour of all the Crown'd Heads.

Mean time, the Sovereigns, who have so cruelly mortify'd the Pontiffs, pretended to be very zealous for *Nazarenism*. Judge therefore, dear *Aaron*, what other Sovereigns might be capable of doing against Popery, were they once fully convinc'd that the Power of the Court of *Rome* is directly contrary to the fundamental Articles of the *Nazarene* Religion.

Since 'tis to the Return of Learning that Princes have been oblig'd for the Right which they have acquir'd of defending themselves against the Insults of the Clergy, it may be laid down for a certain Principle, that the more learned the Laity become, the more will the Phantom of Popery vanish ; and in a short time it will make no Impression but upon the Minds of silly Women and Idiots.

Heretofore, if the Pontiffs did but dispense with the Subject's Oath of Allegiance to the Sovereigns, it was enough to raise a Rebellion in the most tranquil States ; for the credulous *Nazarenes* imagin'd, that when a Kingdom was put under an Interdict, and a King was excommunicated, Heaven would

roar its Thunder, and dart all its Bolts, upon wretched Mortals that were so presumptuous as to resist God's Vicegerent. But now, People are not only convinc'd that the Thunder of the *Vatican* never hurts any body's Health, but even the *French*, and several other Nations maintain, with very great Warmth, that the *Roman* Pontiffs have no Right to excommunicate Kings. If they durst now but attempt what they perform'd in past Ages, with so much Ease and Success, the Subjects themselves, without the Princes seeming to interest themselves in the Offence, would punish the Rashness of the Court of *Rome*. ' If it had happen'd, *says* Pasquier §, that
 ' the Pope, out of Spite, should lay the King and
 ' his Kingdom under an Interdict, in order to ex-
 ' pose it as a Prey to the first Occupier, tho' we
 ' were at Liberty to appeal from him to a future
 ' Council ; yet, without involving ourselves in
 ' Perplexities, and making Choice of the shortest
 ' Way, the Appeal against the Abuse may remedy
 ' it, as being an Undertaking enter'd upon, not only
 ' against the sacred Decrees, but against the express
 ' Word of God which is stronger, and by which he
 ' declares that the Spiritual Jurisdiction shall have
 ' no Power over the Temporal. To make short of
 ' the Matter, we may, by these Models, be arm'd
 ' against all Incroachments that may be made by the
 ' Court of *Rome*, in Prejudice of the King, or the
 ' Ordinaries, and even against the Dispensations
 ' themselves, when it appears, that through surrep-
 ' titious Practices the Holy See has been impos'd
 ' upon, and that they redound more to the De-
 ' struction than to the Edification of the Church.
 ' Otherwise, *said* Gerson, 'tis not using the Ful-
 ' ness of Power, but fully abusing its Power.'

I should be apt to think, dear *Monceca*, that it would have been dangerous, I don't say to an ordinary Prince, but even to a formidable Sovereign, to explain himself in the Language that *Pasquier* did, in the Pontificate of *Hildebrand*; and yet, here's a mere private Man, who declares his Thoughts in public. The Magistrates go further; they authorize them, and there's not a single Counsellor of the Parliament but has a hundred times more Power over the Court of *Rome* than the Emperor *Henry IV.* had. It must be confess'd, therefore, that from the Reign of that unfortunate Monarch to this time, the Power of Popery is diminish'd, at least equally to the Disproportion that there is between the Credit of a mere Judge and that of a Sovereign.

I grant, dear *Monceca*, that there are certain Junctures, when the Power of the *Roman Pontiff* seems to gather Strength, and gives a Blaze which alarms People with the Fears of a Fire not yet extinguish'd; and which, by being latent under the Ashes, is only the more dreadful. But these flying Sparks are the last Efforts of a Flame, which having no more Matter to consume, is forc'd to go out for want of Nourishment, Superstition and Ignorance being the only Combustibles that kept it alive. All Efforts by the Friends of the Court of *Rome* will be in vain. They cannot support a Building whose Foundation trembles so that 'tis ready to tumble with the least Shock. The Props with which they endeavour to support it, only put off its Fall a little while longer. The Divisions and Disturbances which the *Jesuits* have caus'd in *France* for many Years, are much more prejudicial than they are favourable to Popery. The Disputes concerning the Authority of the *Roman Pontiffs* do but serve the more to open Peoples Eyes, and by Consequence to destroy

that Authority. There are some things which suffer infinitely by being look'd into ; and of this kind are those Affairs that relate to the Court of *Rome*. It never enter'd into Peoples Heads to dive into the Bottom of them, till they had lost their Reputation. If the See of *Rome* had never endeavour'd to get that *Constitution* receiv'd, which makes such a Noise at this time ; and if it had always kept the Theological Disputes from the Cognizance of the Laity, the several Parties into which *France* is now divided, would have consisted only of a few hot-headed Clergymen, ready to go together by the Ears. But they were resolv'd to drag the Laity into a Quarrel, which to them was absolutely indifferent. The Pontiffs really believ'd that they should find Dupes among them, ever ready to adopt their Whimsies. To render the *Jansenists* odious, they attempted to restrain private Men from having any Correspondence with Men who they said maintain'd Errors. The *French*, who had too often trusted to the Court of *Rome*, to take its Word any longer, enquir'd whether what they were told was true. The Consequence of this Inquiry has been the very Reverse of what the Pontiffs expected. Three fourths of the Kingdom have embrac'd the Opinions which the Court of *Rome* was for condemning, and which mere Burghers would never have entertain'd, if their Curiosity had not been excited to examine them.

The Pains which the Advocates of the See of *Rome* take to remedy these Evils are to no Purpose. They may indeed carry their Point for a while, so far as to humble these new Enemies of the Pontiffs, but they are too numerous to be destroy'd. When they have recover'd fresh Strength, and repair'd the Evils which they have suffer'd, they will, sooner or later, appear with more Assurance and Intrepidity than

than before: And if they don't take the Field by the same Name, and under the same Standard, they will always be animated by the same Spirit. Admit, that in ten Years time *Jansenism* should be destroy'd in *Paris*, yet it must be more than two Centuries before that Hatred would abate which the Inhabitants have conceiv'd against the Pontiffs. Besides, who knows but this Hatred may some time or other have the Authority of the Sovereign? Is it so very difficult a Matter to render a King of *France* an Enemy to the Court of *Rome*? A slight Quarrel with that Court; a Favour refus'd which 'twas in that Court's Power to have granted; Love, in short, that Deity which conquers all Obstacles, may in a Moment remove those which seem to hinder the Separation of the *French* from the *Romish* Communion. A *Jansenist* Mistress, or one that will countenance any novel Opinion, will do that in an Instant which could not be accomplish'd in several Centuries. Observe, dear *Monceca*, that almost all new Sects are oblig'd to the Women for their Aggrandisement. What Obligations had not Protestantism to Queen *Margaret*? What Advantage did it not reap from *Henry VIII*'s Quarrel with the Court of *Rome* about *Anne of Bullen*? Who knows but a hundred Years hence, if not sooner, some *French* Lady, the Favourite of her King, and an Advocate for some new Opinions, may cause the same Revolutions in *France* as we have known to happen in so many different Countries? At a time when it was least of all expected, and Affairs were suppos'd to be in the most tranquil and secure State that could be, who would have thought that this same *Henry VIII.* (who not thinking it sufficient to defend Popery by his Royal Authority, was resolv'd to do it in the Character of a private Man, and to take up the Pen and turn Author) would become afterwards the

most cruel Enemy of Popery, and set his Kingdom free for ever from the Authority of the Pontiffs?

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; and live content and happy.



LETTER CXV.

From AARON MONCECA, at Berlin, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt, but formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

WHEN I arriv'd at *Berlin*, dear *Isaac*, I was not a little surpriz'd to find *Jeremiah Plozfs*, whom thou didst know many Years at *Constantinople*, and who, by the Death of his Father, has been oblig'd to come to *Germany*. He has lost a Part of his Estate, the same having been withheld from him, under Colour of certain pretended Misdemeanors which he was accus'd of being guilty of in the Direction of the Household of a rich Gentleman, to whom he was a Steward. This is a Trick pretty common in this Country, where the Expedient is very often made use of to take an Advantage of the Labour and Toil of some unfortunate *Israelite*.

Jeremiah Plozfs has shew'd me all the Remarkables at *Berlin*. This City has a distinguish'd Rank among the fine Towns of *Europe*; its Streets are spacious and airy; the Houses are built in a very good Taste; and their Architecture is set off by their Uniformity. The Royal Palace is very magnificent;
tho'

tho' 'tis not yet finish'd. The Suburbs of *Berlin* vie with the City for Beauty and Grandeur ; but that of *Frederickstadt* surpasses all the others : The Streets are as strait as a Line, and of a considerable Length.

The Inhabitants of this Country in general, resemble the other *Germans* in their Manners. They are frank and honest, brave Soldiers, and incapable of being prepossess'd in favour of one Nation more than another ; for Merit is dear to them wherever it is ; and 'tis the same thing to them to commend a Foreigner as one of their own Country, where their Merit is equal. They look upon all Men as form'd of the same Clay. They believe, with Reason, that to think, reflect, judge and draw Consequences, is a Privilege granted to every rational Being ; and that Men of Sense ought to learn the Good they find in any Nation, without being so silly as to reject an excellent thing, and to seek to criticize it, because it was done on this or the other side of the *Rhine*. They leave the *English* in Possession of such a ridiculous Conceit, as to imagine that a Man born at *Dover* is much more excellent than another born at *Calais*.

The *Germans* are the Ancestors of the *French*, who are perhaps oblig'd to them for some Part of what there is good in their Manners. When I was at *Paris*, I saw more than one *Frenchman* who was strongly of this Opinion ; and sure I am, that there are more of them who adopt it, than there are who reject it. What is very particular is, the Sympathy there always was between the *French* and *German* Nations, notwithstanding the bloody Wars in which they have been engag'd by their Princes. Honour was always a much greater Motive for their fighting than Animosity ; and whenever a Peace put an End to their Quarrels, they imitated the Heroes of *Ho-*

mer, and gave each other mutual Proofs of the reciprocal Esteem they had for one another.

The *Germans* also acknowledge how welcome they are in *France*; and of this, several of their learned Men have given public Testimonies*.

The *Nazarene* Religion which is exercis'd at *Berlin*, is the *Lutheran*. The *Calvinist* is profess'd there likewise; but 'tis not the Religion that bears Sway. One Part of *Germany* separated a little above two hundred Years ago from the Communion of the *Nazarene* Papists. 'Twas a certain Monk, a Man of great Abilities†, who having taken some Pique at the Court of *Rome*, gave it that fatal Blow; and the Division which there was at the same time between several Princes of the Empire, was of extraordinary Service to him; otherwise he would never have accomplish'd his Designs; and all his Eloquence would perhaps have been of no other Service, than to draw the same Fate upon him which had, some Years before, happen'd to *Savonarola* ‡.

* See what M. *Wallin* says, in a Work intituled, *Latetia Parisiorum erudita*, printed in 1722, at *Nuremburg*. *Ingratissimus omnium quos Terra unquam produxit Hominum forem, nisi, quod verum sit de Galliâ, siue eam Togatam, siue Sagatam, siue etiam Sacram, considero, dicerem, nihil eâ ipsa dari elegantius, et Societati Hominum civili gratius*; i. e. I should be the most ungrateful Man that ever the Earth bred, if I did not declare the Truth of what I know concerning *France*, whether as to the Gentlemen of the long Robe, or of the Sword, or its Clergy, viz. that there is not a Nation in the World more polite, and better turn'd for Civil Society.

† *Luther*.

‡ He was a Friar of the Order of St. *Dominic*, who was hang'd with a couple of his Comrades at *Florence*, in 1498, for having preach'd against the Irregularities of the Court of *Rome*.

The *Germans* really believe what they were taught in their Youth, and don't trouble themselves with the Inquiry, whether the Doctrines of their Religion are true or false. They leave it to the *French* to waste their Time in fruitless Disputes; and as to such as have abandoned the *Romish* Communion, they have been forc'd to it by the Monks, whose Insolence and Assurance were carried to such a Pitch that the *German* Good-nature could not brook it.

They who ascribe the Conversion of the *Germans* to the Learning and Subtlety of their Divines, know little of that Nation. Syllogisms have scarce any Effect upon them: Moreover, in the Beginning of the Troubles on account of the *Nazarene* Religion, the Papists were so ignorant, that Learning was to them of no Use.

The Learned in *Germany* have publish'd several literary Tracts that abound with Things both curious and useful. But so voluminous are they, that it were to be wish'd they were to be cast into a Crucible, and refin'd, by which means a Part of them might come out the more useful. Certainly very good Gold might be extracted from them; and, on the other hand, a great deal of unprofitable Alloy might be separated from them, which very much diminishes the Value of the precious Metal where-with they are mix'd.

There are great Men however in this Country; and the Universities abound with very good Civilians and able Physicians. The famous *Puffendorf*, Author of *The Law of Nature and Nations*, and of several other Works, deserves to be rank'd in the first Class of learned Men, and to be consider'd as the Rival and Competitor of the illustrious *Grotius*.

The *Germans* have also several good Historians. 'Tis true, their Style is sometimes diffuse, vague, and by Consequence languid. The too great Credit

which they give to certain foreign Authors, involves them also in another Error, and hinders their distinguishing the Truth from Falshood, especially when they treat of any other State but their own. The *German* Sincerity can't conceive how 'tis possible for an Historian to lye in the Face of the whole World. It were therefore to be wish'd that some kind Friend would charitably admonish them not to trust to the *Spanish*, *Italian*, *English* nor *French* Writers till they have duly consider'd what Degree of Credit they deserve.

I could wish, for Instance, that they would rely a good deal upon *Thuanus*, pretty much upon *Mezeray*, a little upon *Daniel*, but not at all upon *Maimbourg* and *Varillas*, and less, if it was possible, upon *Jouvenci*; that of all the *Italians* they would trust no Author but *Father Paul*; and that in order to form themselves to the Majesty of History, they would read *Davila*, an excellent Author, if he had said nothing of the Pontiffs and the Inquisition, and if he had but always made the Truth as eminent, as his Style was clear, and his Reflections solid. I would have them consider all the *Spanish* Histories, when they treat of Things done in their own Country, as the Works of Monks relating the Annals of their Convents. With some, every thing is a Prodigy, and marvellous; with others, every thing is a Miracle, and an Act of sacred Devotion. The *English*, who are not so grave to outward Appearance as the *Spaniards*, but every-whit as conceited, have a great Number of Declaimers, but not one Historian. Having too rich an Opinion of their own dear selves, they are not only unmerciful in their Treatment of foreign Nations, but even know not how to do Justice to themselves, they are always so blinded by a Spirit of Party. A *Jacobite* Historian places *Mary Stuart* among the greatest *Nazarene* Saints, and does

does not scruple to erect a Throne to her near that of the Divine Being. A *Whig* Historian, on the contrary, after having publicly accus'd her of Debauchery, Adultery and Murder, sends her without any Ceremony to all the D—ls in H—. A certain *Frenchman* has wrote the *History of England*, and he has perform'd it so candidly, that the *English* have been oblig'd to adopt it as the best that had been ever written of their Affairs. This is, undoubtedly much to the Honour of the *French* Writers; but, unfortunately, a sudden Stop has been put to this sort of Triumph. *Rapin Thoyras* dy'd before he finish'd his Work, and other *Frenchmen* have added such a pitiful Sequel to it, that they have done their own Nation almost as much Dishonour as the former had done it Honour.

Among the antient *German* Authors, *Sleidan* stands in a very distinguish'd Rank. He wrote the *History of the State of Religion, and of the Republic, under Charles V.* The *German* Papists indeed don't esteem this Work quite so much as the *German Lutherans* do, but however they do it Justice, and 'tis generally approv'd.

Among the Moderns, *Hubner* has wrote almost as many Volumes as *Gregorio Leti*; but he is of more Use than that voluminous *Italian*, to whom the illustrious *Bayle* has ingeniously apply'd that Verse of *Virgil*:

*Tam Ficti Præviq̃ue tenax, quam Nuncia Veri**,
i. e.

*Things done relates, not done he feigns,
And mingles Truth with Lyes.*

Whatever Talent *Hubner* had, he could not surmount those Faults which are common to

* *Bayle's Letters, Tom. I. p. 364.*

his Nation. He falls sometimes into tedious and impertinent Narrations. The too great Credit which he gives, without Distinction, to all foreign Authors, has hinder'd him to be as exact as he might have been, if he had pleas'd to use more Precaution. But that's the Rock on which all Compilers have split.

Seckendorff is a great Man: He has wrote with a great deal of Spirit, Probity, Candour and Impartiality; but he is too prolix, and too diffuse. The illustrious *Bayle*, writing to a Friend of his, gives this Character of him: 'M. de *Seckendorff*'s Answer to the *Lutheranism* of *Maimbourg* has been printed in two large Volumes in Folio. 'Tis a curious Work but a very tedious one. 'Tis intitled, *Commentarius Historicus & Apologeticus de Lutheranism*o *adversus* *Maimburgium*, &c. *'

The Genius of the *Germans* in general, which is not very sprightly, and their Language, which is more proper to write Tracts of Learning and Morality than Pieces of Eloquence and Poetry, seem to be an Argument why there are not and cannot be many Poets and Orators among them: Nevertheless, some they have: The best of those are *Saxons*, if we except one *Brocks* a *Hamburgher*, who passes for an excellent Author. The *Germans* say, that the Compositions of these Poets are good and harmonious; but they have two antient and powerful Prejudices against them.

The first is founded upon the Authority of *Aristotle*, who being born in a hot Country, imagin'd that the Genius of Men that liv'd in cold Countries could not be susceptible of much Fire. But since Experience has shewn us for some time past, that the Authority of honest *Aristotle* was very weak; and that the *Nazarenes* do no longer look upon his Sen-

* *Bayle's Letters*, Tom. I. p. 364.

timents as Articles of Faith; this Prejudice may be look'd upon as very false.

The second is founded upon the little Figure which their Poets make in *Europe*. As to this, I should think it confirm'd by Reason. For tho' an Author writes in a Language peculiar to his Country, yet if he is of distinguish'd Merit, he is quickly translated into all Languages, and becomes common to all *Europe*. *Petrarch*, *Ariosto*, *Tasso*, *Guarini* †, are translated into *French*, *Spanish*, *English*, &c. *Milton's Paradise Lost*, and several Works of *Pope* §, are translated almost into as many Languages. All the Universe, by means of the many Translations, is Master of the fine Pieces of *Corneille* and *Racine*; and the *Andromache* of the latter has been translated by the most excellent *Italian* Poet of these latter Times.

I don't know any *German* Poem, dear *Isaac*, that has made any Figure in *Europe*; and I question whether ever there was one translated. This would make me suspect, either that the *German* Poets are not so excellent as they think them, or that they perceive Beauties in their Works which are unknown to the rest of human Beings. In this Case the *German* Poems would be a kind of *Talismans*, that had no Virtue but conditionally.

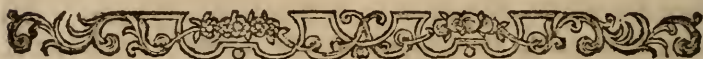
Thou knowest, dear *Isaac*, that *Charles V.* was heard to say, that when he was to pray to God, it should be in *Spanish*; that he would court his Mistress in *Italian*, compliment his Friends in *French*, and correct his Horses in *High-Dutch*. Where then can be the Harmony and Softness of *German* Verses? The Muses are shy of a Language, the Roughness of which shocks them. But as there is no Language but may be capable of a soft and

† *Italian* Poets.

§ *English* Poets.

agreeable Cadence, when 'tis well express'd, I should think that the Fault of the *German* Poems is owing rather to the Poets than the Language. There are Nations that are not so excellent as others in certain Sciences. The *Germans* indeed are eminent for their Skill in the Law of Nations, Politics, Literature and Philosophy; and their Philosopher *Leibnitz* alone is as good to them as a hundred Poets, in the Republic of Letters.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and live content and happy.



L E T T E R CXVI.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Madrid, *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Berlin.

HAVING given thee an Account how the Monks behave here in their Gallantries, nothing remains for me but to convey some Idea to thee how the Gentlemen treat their Mistresses. They act according to a Ceremonial which is almost as difficult to discharge in all its Parts as the antient *Etiquette* or Ceremony of the Court.

Before a *Spaniard* declares his Passion he must for seven or eight Months dance Attendance in the Night-time under his Mistress's Windows; he must try to gain her Esteem and Favour by abundance of Serenades; he must be sure to go regularly to the Churches which his Fair-one frequents; and finally, he must lash himself devoutly under her Windows, if Opportunity presents, and if his Mistress happens to be a Spectator of the Processions made by the *Nazarenes* towards the End of their *Lent* Seasons.

When

When a *Spaniard* thinks, that by all these Extravagancies he has made some Impression upon the Heart of the Person he makes Love to, he ventures to send a Billet-doux to her, by the Favour of an old *Duena* †, whom he takes care to secure in his Interest. If he is so fortunate as to obtain an Answer to it, he thinks himself the happiest Man in Life. Then he begins to converse with his Mistress by Signs in the Walks and at Church, and this he does continually till he has marry'd her. Then he shuts her up, and is more or less jealous of her, according as he has found her more or less cruel; the Happiness and Tranquility of a Wife commonly depending on the bad Nights, which she made her Husband spend when he was but a Lover, and on the Severities with which she treated him. The haughty Don *Sancho's* and Don *Pedro's* can't conceive how Mortals can be happy with Ease when it costs them so much Pains to be so; and they have so fond an Opinion of their own Merit, that they have no Distrust of the Virtue and Fidelity of their Wives.

This Country has been treated by many Authors as the very Centre of Gallantry. But I don't think there's any Place under the Heavens where 'tis less known, except a Medley of Frolics be admitted to pass for Complaisance; and unless it be granted that a Man cannot be a tender Lover, without being a Fool and a Madman.

Let Men cry up the Discretion, Gravity and Constancy of a *Spaniard* as much as they please, all these pretended Virtues are blended with so many ridiculous Follies, that unless a Man is accusom'd to them, he must look upon them with more Contempt than the Sauciness and Stupidity of the *French Petits Maitres*.

* The *Duena* is a sort of Governess.

I am of Opinion, that out of a *Spaniard* and a *Frenchman* together might be form'd a tolerable Lover, tho' both are seldom so when they are in Love. Be it as it will, I had much rather see People always laughing and giggling, singing, dancing and playing the Fool, than to hear them continually groaning, sighing, wailing and lamenting. Love is an Infant which is nourish'd by Sports and Pastimes; but when 'tis kept under Constraint, it becomes somewhat gloomy and cruel. And we often find in this Country, that the jealous Temper of the *Spaniards* is drove by Melancholy to the Commission of surprizing Outrages. The Women themselves are guilty of this Fault, and their Passion renders them capable of attempting the greatest of Crimes. They are as jealous as the Men; and Love in *Spain* is rather a horrible Fury than an agreeable Passion, granted to Mortals to make them happy.

Towards the Close of the last Century, the Marquis *d'Astorgas*, of the Family of *Osoño*, Steward of the Queen's Household, who was marry'd to a Lady that was extremely jealous of him, fell in Love with an amiable young Woman that was a great Beauty. The Marchioness, enrag'd to be so rivall'd, resolv'd to be reveng'd on her. 'She went therefore to the House of her Husband's Mistress, with a good Attendance, kill'd her, tore out her Heart, made a Ragoû of it, and presented it in the Dish to her Husband, who had no sooner eat of it, but she ask'd how he lik'd it? 'Tis very good, *said he to her*. I don't wonder at it, *said she*; 'tis the Heart of that Mistress whom you was so fond of. Immediately she drew out her Head all bloody, which she had conceal'd under her Hoop, and roll'd it upon the Table where he was sitting with his Friends. 'Tis easy to judge what a shocking Sight it was to them. She fled to a
 ' Convent,

‘ Convent, where she became mad with Rage and
 ‘ Jealousy ; and there she ended her Days : And so
 ‘ great was the Affliction of the unfortunate Mar-
 ‘ quis, that it had like to have drove him into
 ‘ Despair †.’

A Story so surprizing as this would scarce meet with Credit, if the Persons whom it concern’d were not known to all *Europe* ; and Posterity will be astonish’d to see the Fact set out in all its Circumstances by the Authors of this Time. Jealousy is the Cause of Murders and Assassinations in *Spain* every Day. They don’t scruple to make use of Poison to get rid of a Rival of either Sex ; and the Women are commonly more intemperate than the Men in a Passion so dangerous.

But be the jealous Temper of the *Spaniards* ever so violent, ’tis not so much owing to the Tenderness of Love’s Passion, as to that Vanity and Self-Conceit which forms the principal Character of that Nation. The *Italians* are only jealous from Constitution, but the *Spaniards* are not only so constitutionally, but from Pride. Were they to love their Wives and Mistresses but indifferently, they would not hate their Rivals the less ; it being an Unpardonable Crime with them to be told that any body is more deserving than themselves : For a Rival is always guilty by being preferr’d, and a Mistress by granting such Preference.

Were I to make my Choice, dear *Monceca*, among the fair Sex, I should wish her to have the Sprightliness of the *Spanish* Lady, the Gaiety of the *Italian*, and the Freedom of the *French*. These Qualities united would absorb what there is too much of in one. I look upon Love to be like *Tartar Emetic* :

† *Memoirs of the Court of Spain, &c. Tom. I.*
 p. 137.

’Tis

'Tis a Poison in its own Nature, but may be so alleviated as to be render'd useful. Happy those Lovers who know the just Preparation of this agreeable Remedy!

They who are in Love in this Country have a great Advantage by virtue of the Decisions of an Assembly of the *Nazarene* Pontiffs, which was held near 200 Years ago *. They may marry without the Consent of their Parents, which is a Practice directly contrary to the Laws and Customs of *France*. Consequently the Fathers in this Country are never sure who will be the Husbands of their Daughters; for there are several who go with their Lover to a Priest, where they receive the Nuptial Benediction, and are marry'd in spite of their Families, who cannot answer to maltreat them, or hinder them from living with the Man they have chose for their Husband.

The Assembly of the *Nazarene* Pontiffs, which decided that the Consent of the Father was not necessary to Marriage, went upon the Principle that such Union only consisted in the free and voluntary Consent of the two Parties †. It forbid the dissolving of Marriages, as is the Practice in *France*, and declar'd for a literal Adherence to the Maxim of their sovereign Legislator, which commands them not to put asunder, on any Pretence whatsoever, those whom God had join'd together §. And to the End that this Law might be strictly observ'd, the same Assembly pronounc'd an *Anathema*, not only against the Secular Judges, who should take

* The Council of *Trent*.

† Matrimonium est Consensus Partium liber et voluntarius. *Council of Trent*.

§ Quod ergo Deus conjunxit, Homo non separet, *Matth. xix. 6*.

Cognizance of the Incidents and Disputes that might arise concerning the Celebration of Marriages, but also against those who should presume to think that such Matters are not cognizable by the Ecclesiastical Judges *.

What's pretty odd is, that several of the Decrees of this Assembly, upon which the Faith of the *Narrarenes* in *Spain* is founded, are not at all admitted in *France*. The Parliaments have establish'd a Distinction between Faith and Discipline. They have asserted, that this Assembly could not decide Matters that were not within its Jurisdiction, and much less could they do it in such a way as is directly contrary to the Privileges of the *French* Nation. Its Tribunals, therefore, as thou knowest, dissolve a great many Marriages, and declare them void, when they have been concluded against the Laws and Regulations of the Kingdom.

There is nothing so prudent as the Care of the Parliaments to maintain their own Prerogatives, those of the temporal Judges, and those which Parents ought to have over their Children. How many Disorders are the Consequence of that Indulgence which is imprudently granted to the latter, of marrying without the Consent of their Superiors? Is it not paving the Way to Confusion and Disturbance? Is it not setting the Sons of a Family free from that Submission which they owe to those who brought them into the World, and which has been so strongly recommended to all the Antients? 'Tis one of God's express Commandments in his Law. 'Tis impossible for Children that fear and honour their Parents, to dispose of their own Persons with-

* Si quis dixerit Causas Matrimoniales non ad Judices Ecclesiasticos pertinere, Anathema sit. *Council of Trent.*

out their Parents Consent; and 'tis plainly neglecting to take their Advice in the most important Action of Life.

The Custom which permits the Sons of a Family to settle themselves, without consulting their Parents, is not only contrary to the Law of Nature, but is also intirely destructive of the Harmony of Civil Society. It is the Cause of Unions and Marriages the most extraordinary and most disproportion'd. What Evil is there that may not be apprehended from a Law that permits young People, carry'd away by the Fury of their Passions, to gratify those same Passions, and to follow wheresoever they lead them? We every Day see Persons that are advanc'd in Years, running into prodigious Errors, and making Settlements which disgrace or ruin them. What will not those do, therefore, who are drawn aside by the Violence of their Constitution, and have neither the Experience nor the Knowledge of older Men?

Yet none of these Reasons could prevail with the *Spaniards* to use the wise Precaution of the *French*; for without Distinction and without Reserve, they receive the Decrees of that Pontifical Assembly, which the others rejected in Affairs of Discipline. And such extraordinary Adventures happen every Day in this Country, that they convince the *Spaniards* in spite of their Prejudice and Superstition, that the *French* have acted very discreetly, in setting Bounds to the Licentiousness of the Youth, and confining the Cognizance of all Matters relating to Civil Society, to the Secular Judges.

One very often sees young Ladies of Distinction marry'd to Clowns, or the domestic Servants of their Fathers; and young Men of Quality not asham'd to match with the Daughters of the Dregs
of

of the People. Twelve or fourteen Years ago, the Daughter of a Governor of *Catalonia* * was marry'd privately to a Man not worth a Groat, who had been her Father's Page. And the Governor could not only never obtain the Dissolution of so unequal a Marriage, but was even oblig'd to let his Daughter go away with his Husband.

Thou wilt confess, dear *Monceca*, that this sort of Conduct is what absolutely ruins that good Order which ought to prevail in a State ; and that the introducing such pernicious Maxims into a Government is enough to overthrow it. It must be confess'd, however, that there is not so much Danger of 'em in *Spain* as there would be in another Country, the Pride and Vanity of this Nation being a very great Hindrance to unequal Marriages. The haughty and disdainful Don *Diego's*, and Don *Rodrigo's*, are not so ready to descend from their Rank ; and they must be desperately in Love to proceed to such an Extremity.

The Women are not so scrupulous ; consequently we find many more such disproportion'd Matches on their Part than on the Mens Side ; for they have not so much Power to resist as the Men have, tho' they are every whit as proud, this being a Foible common to every thing that breathes in this Country. Even Foreigners, after some Stay here, contract this ill Habit ; and we see *Frenchmen* here that affect a grave sedate Air, that walk with stiff and solemn Pace, and endeavour to speak little and sententiously : They are even more ridiculous than the *Spaniards* ; and I can't conclude my Letter so well as by applying to them this notable Passage out of one of the most celebrated *French* Writers :

* The Count *de Montemar*.

Gravity is a Mystery of the Body, invented to conceal the Defects of the Mind †.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with his Benefits?



L E T T E R CXVII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Hamburg,
to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, in Egypt,
formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.*

Dear ISAAC,

I Have been arrived for some Days past at *Hamburg*, which is reckon'd one of the richest Cities in *Germany*. A great many Merchants from all the Nations of *Europe* flock to it for the sake of Commerce. The River *Elbe*, is a very great Ornament to it; and 'tis navigable by Ships to the very Ramparts of the City.

Hamburg is very well built, and full of very fine Houses. Here are several magnificent Walks; and the Beauty of the public Structures is answerable to the Wealth of its private Inhabitants. The Magistrates have the Government of Affairs Political and Civil, and represent the Sovereign. This is one of those they call Imperial Cities. It has the Prerogative of keeping their own Guard, and of coining Money; and for making a certain Acknowledgment to the

† *La Rochefoucault.*

Emperor,

Emperor, it enjoys all the Privileges of a free and independent Republic.

Of this Class of Cities there's a considerable Number, which are all very jealous of their Privileges, and form as many petty Republics. Their Territories, small as they are, are bigger than those of a great many Sovereigns that we see in *Germany*, which Country alone contains more Courts than all the rest of *Europe* together ; so that a Traveller often passes through five or six different Dominions in a Day. As diminutive as these Princes are, yet they have several Gentlemen that attend them in the Quality of Courtiers ; but they don't cost them much ; for the greatest Expence of these Mimics of Sovereigns consists in the Table they keep, which commonly licks up two Thirds of their Revenues.

There are as many *Highnesses* in *Germany* as there are *Excellencies* in *Brabant* : But the *German Highnesses* have a considerable Advantage over the *Flemish Excellencies* ; for they have the sad Prerogative of tormenting the Inhabitants of two or three Villages, and they can even hang them up, if they have a Fancy for it ; whereas the *Excellencies* of *Flanders* and *Brabant* are but mere Gentlemen, who have no more Power over their Vassals than what the Gentry commonly have in all Countries. It were to be wish'd, for the Happiness and Tranquility of *Germany*, that all those petty Sovereigns were reduc'd by the Emperor, to the same Pass that the Kings of *France* have reduc'd the Swarm of little Tyrants that were heretofore in their Dominions.

To live happy in *Germany* is to reside in some Imperial City, or in the Dominions of the Electors, who are as powerful, and even as formidable, as those that I have mention'd to thee are weak and inconsiderable. There are several of the Electors

whose Courts are nothing inferior to those of Kings, and every thing about them strongly denotes Grandeur and Magnificence.

Denmark pretends to have Prerogatives over the City of *Hamburg*, which has had frequent Disputes with that Crown, and would, perhaps, have much ado to maintain their Rights, if the Empire was not oblig'd to protect it as an Imperial City, and did not oppose the Undertakings of that Crown against it.

The Burghers and the Merchants of this City are very polite. Their Attachment to Commerce does not take them off from the Duties of the Gentleman. They love, and even cultivate the Arts and Sciences, and several of them read good Books to unbend themselves from their Business. There are many Libraries here well chose. The greatest Poet that *Germany* ever produc'd was a *Hamburger*. Many People say that *Brocks* may be compar'd with the most excellent of the *French* Poets ; but I know not whether this is not carrying the Point a little too far. What I wrote to thee from *Berlin* must have come to thy Hand by this time, about *German* Poetry : I have not yet chang'd my Opinion, and I don't allow the *Germans* the same Rank in Poetry as in the Civil Law and Philosophy. Every Nation has its peculiar Talents. Heaven would have been unjust in its Distributions, if, after having granted a *Puffendorf* and a *Leibnitz* to the *Germans*, it had also produc'd a *Moliere* and a *Boileau* among them.

As to *Leibnitz* I have heard a particular Anecdote of him in this Country. That illustrious Philosopher had a Bastard, whom he employ'd as his Clerk, and in whom he plac'd great Confidence. His Name was *William Dinniger*. *Des Cartes* had also a Daughter by his Mistress call'd *Francina*, whom he had not the Satisfaction to bring up ; for she dy'd young, and he lamented the Loss of her very much. I am not

scan-

scandaliz'd, dear *Isaac*, when I see the greatest of Men liable to little Failings ; for, as they are Men, 'tis but natural that they have a Trial of every thing that appertains to the human Nature. I respect even the Fruit and Issue of their Frailty : The Bastard of *Leibnitz*, if he had but resembled his Father, would have been more dear to me than the lawful Son of a *German* Prince, who has nothing to boast but his Descent. Nay, I believe I should have preferr'd the Philosopher's Bastard to the Prince himself, if he had had as much Learning, and as many good Qualities, as his Father.

This is not my private Opinion only, for it has been maintain'd by a great many ingenious Men. ' Not long ago, said a French *Writer* †, this trite & frivolous Question was proposed in a celebrated Company, viz. Which was the greatest Man in the World, *Cæsar*, *Alexander*, *Tamerlane*, *Cromwel* ? &c. One of them made answer Sir *Isaac Newton* was undoubtedly the greatest Man. His Assertion was just ; for if true Greatness consists in having receiv'd a prodigious Genius from Heaven, and making use of it to enlighten his own and others Understandings, such a Man as Sir *Isaac Newton*, who is hardly to be found in ten Centuries, is really that great Man ; and those Politicians, those Conquerors, of which there have been some in all Ages, are commonly but illustrious wicked Men.'

These few Words, dear *Isaac*, are so complete a Panegyric upon Learning, and the good Use of it, that nothing can be added to it. What is it to me, a Native of *France*, *England* or *Holland*, that a Prince of *Germany* has a splendid Court, that he keeps a good Table, that he has a numerous

† *Voltaire's* Letters concerning the *English*, p. 79.

Train of Domestics and Courtiers ? What am I the better for it ? And what Advantage is it to *Europe* ?

Of what Service is it to Society for Princes to give some of their Favourites such vast Presents as intitle them to the Character of being generous ?

How many Calamities are owing to the vain Ambition of some Sovereigns, who are for enlarging their Dominions, and invading those of their Neighbours ? How many wretched Mortals has it not condemn'd to Death ? How many Victims has it not sacrific'd to Envy and Jealousy ? How many Men have there not been ruin'd purely that one Man might have the arrogant Title of Conqueror ? What Madness is it therefore, to bestow the Name of *Great* upon a Mortal, born to make all his Subjects miserable ?

A Sovereign cannot come up to the Glory of a *Newton*, or such other Philosopher of equal Reputation, but by rendering himself the Father of his People, and procuring them all the Felicities that are in his Power : He then becomes useful to Mankind, and imitates the Philosopher. The Prince and the Scholar are equal in Merit ; the one informs the Understanding, and improves the Judgment ; and the other procures and maintains the Tranquility which is so necessary to the Welfare of Society, and the Advancement of the Sciences.

The Magistrates of *Hamburg* endeavour by their wise Conduct to put these Precepts in Practice. They make it their Business to encourage all the Arts which they think may contribute to render the People easy ; and, as most of them have travell'd in their Youth, they make use of what they have seen of most Advantage in foreign Countries, and appropriate it to their own.

All the *Germans* in general are great Travellers ; but there are many who know not how to make so good a Use of their Travels as the *Hamburgers*. One Half of the Barons, and petty Gentry, that travel into divers Parts of *Europe*, only bring home the Names of what Towns they saw. 'Tis enough for them that they spent a good deal of Money at *Paris*, *Rome*, *Madrid*, or *London* ; but at their Return home they find Ways and Means to make their unfortunate Vassals replace the Money they have foolishly squander'd. Woe be to the poor *Germans*, when their Gentry at *Paris* happen to fall into the Hands of any of the Women at the Opera ! Every Jewel, every Present, in short, bestow'd upon the greedy Mistress, does them as much Prejudice as the Hail does, when it beats down their Fruits in the Country.

The meaner Sort of People at *Hamburg* are not at all afraid of those Misfortunes. Their Freedom insures their Tranquility. This is all that they work for, and they are not afraid of being oblig'd to pay for the Follies of a young Blockhead. It were to be wish'd, that being content and satisfy'd with their Privileges, they were so prudent as not to abuse them ; and that they would keep within the Bounds of a wise Subjection to their Magistrates. But they make an ill Use of their Liberty, and nothing is so insolent as the Populace of *Hamburg*. They are often wanting in their Obedience due to the Magistrates, whom they own to be vested with the sovereign Power ; and the said Magistrates have enough to do to prevent Disturbances from a People always ready to mutiny.

The City of *Hamburg* has a dangerous Rival in its Neighbourhood, viz. *Altena*, that rises insensibly, and becomes every Day more and more considerable. There's a very great Jealousy between the

Inhabitants of the two Towns ; and so far is it from being like to diminish, that it will rather increase as long as *Altena* continues to aggrandize itself.

The *Hamburgers*, as well as all the *Germans*, love good Chear. If we may take *Montaigne's* Word for it ; *The Germans drink almost indifferently of all Wines with Pleasure, their Business being to swallow, more than to taste. To drink after the French Fashion at the two Meals, and then but moderately, is to be too abstemious in the Use of the Favours of the God of Wine. There is more Time and Constancy requir'd than that comes to †.*

Since *Montaigne's* Time there's a new Face of Things in *Germany*. They drink still there ; but so far are they from esteeming Drunkenness as a Virtue, that they are almost ready to censure it as a Vice *. Formerly there was a Necessity of drinking to Excess, or a Man was look'd upon with Contempt. But now, even at Feasts every body is left at Liberty to drink as much or as little as they please. The Women of Quality drink very little Wine ; and many of the *German Women* are very sober, compar'd to the *French Women*. After this, it can be no longer doubted, that the most antient Customs are chang'd by Time ; and when a Man reflects how the *Germans* are come off from their Drunkenness, he will not think it impossible for the *Jesuits* to be cur'd of their Ambition. Nothing less than so convincing an Instance could give any Hopes of a Conversion so unexpected.

† *Montaigne's* Essays, lib. ii. cap. 2.

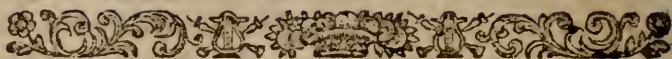
* This only refers to the Men of Quality and the Burghers ; for as to the common People, they drink now as liberally as they did in *Montaigne's* Time.

There is sometimes a Company of *French* Comedians at *Hamburg*, as there is also in most of the Courts of *Germany*. I applaud their Judgment in this Point ; for I really think the *French* Theatre the most perfect in *Europe*. In all the Countries thro' which I ever travell'd, and in which a good Taste prevail'd, I never mis'd seeing a *French* Comedy, and an *Italian* Opera. This seems to fix the Merit of the Theatres of these two Nations.

There's a *German* Opera in this City, the Music of which is in the *Italian* Taste. The Masters that compose the Pieces that are play'd here, were a long time at *Rome* ; but the *German* Words have not that soft Cadence which is so necessary to harmonize with Music : Nor do the Actors come near to the Perfection of the *Italian* Virtuosi ; they have neither their Taste nor their Voice. Yet the *German* Opera is pleasing to all Persons that only attend to the Goodness of the Music.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy ; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Wealth and Prosperity ! I shall take the first Opportunity to depart for *London*.





L E T T E R CXVIII.

From JACOB BRITO, at Madrid, to
AARON MONCECA, at Hamburg.

THIS is like to be the last Letter that I shall write to thee from *Madrid*; for I am preparing to set out forthwith for *Lishon*: Mean time the Business I had in this City being intirely finish'd, I amuse myself with running over the Libraries of the rich private Men, and of the Convents, which really are so poorly furnish'd, and with such a bad Sortiment of Books, that I am but little the better for it; there being hardly any besides some Books of Divinity, Poetry, and Store of Romances. There's none of those Books to be seen here that have restor'd Good-sense to the World, and shewn the Understanding how to make use of the Light of Nature. Instead of *Newton*, *Des Cartes*, *Gassendi*, *Locke*, *Bayle*, *Mallebranche*, &c. here are a great many School Philosophers, whose Writings are but Compilations, as voluminous as they are indigested, of the strangest Visions.

Sound Philosophy is what they know nothing of in *Spain*. The Inquisition, its most mortal Enemy, persecutes every Person that offers to enlighten Mankind. It is so much the Interest of that Court to keep them in their Blindness, that it is sure to punish those who attempt to clear the Mist that is before their Eyes. The *Spaniards* are indeed permitted to discharge all the animal Functions; but they are
expressly

expresly forbid to Think. Every Man that presumes to broach the least Sentiment which is not to the Taste of the Monks, is inhumanly made a Prisoner for Life. The unfortunate *Galileo*, at the Age of fourscore, groaned in the Prisons of the Inquisition, for having demonstrated a Thing of which every true Philosopher is now fully perswaded *. There was a Time when all the *Nazarene* Pontiffs declar'd those to be Heretics who maintained that there were *Antipodes*. Poor *Virgil*, the Bishop of *Saltzburg*, was not he formerly persecuted by Pope *Zachary* and the Archbishop *Boniface*, for presuming to support that abominable Error? But somewhat more than two Centuries ago, *Christopher Columbus* happily clear'd up the Point.

The *Spanish* Libraries are scarce any better furnish'd with modern Historians than they are with Philosophers. A Writer is oblig'd to accommodate himself to the Superstition of the Country. Thou plainly perceivest that the Truth of History cannot appear in a State where the Writers are oblig'd not only to commend the most odious Actions of the Monks, but also intirely to omit what might give them Offence. They have however some Historians of their own Nation that deserve the Esteem of good Judges; but of these there are very few.

Anthony de Solis, Author of *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*, is one of the Chief. It would have been a Piece not inferior to the Histories of *Tacitus*, *Salust*, and *Titus Livy*, if he had but left out the great Number of Miracles which he has stuff'd it with, and which he pretends were operated in favour of *Ferdinando Cortes* and his Companions, who were nevertheless the greatest Rascals in the World; and if he had not too often magnify'd

* The Motion of the Earth.

Things in their Favour. He speaks with a great Air of Truth, of a certain Monument that was cover'd, for several Days, with a miraculous Cloud * ; and notwithstanding he had such a Genius, he could not divest himself of the Prejudices of his Country, nor help giving too much credit to Monkish Superstition.

Sandoval is another pretty good Author ; but he had neither the Genius nor the Merit of *Solis*. He is not near so exact, and far more superstitious. For Instance ; he gives a long Detail of the Miracles that happen'd when *Charles V.* gain'd a Victory over the Protestants of *Germany* ; and tells an absurd ridiculous Story as a Fact known by all *Europe* to be true. He gravely affirms, That during the Battle, the Sun appear'd red as Blood, not only over all *Germany*, but also in *France* and *Italy*. It were to be wish'd, for his sake, and for the Dignity of the History which he wrote, that he had spoke as ludicrously of this Fable as the Duke of *Alva* did, when *Henry II.* King of *France* ask'd him for an Account of this pretended Miracle at *Paris* : *Pardon me, Sir*, said that prudent General to him, *If I am not able to satisfy your Curiosity : I was really so much taken up that Day with what was doing upon Earth, that I had not Leisure to consider what pass'd in Heaven.*

That same Duke of *Alva*, during the Revolt in the *Netherlands*, had sent his Son to lay Siege to *Haerlem* : But the Son met with such Difficulties in it, that despairing of being ever able to take it, he wrote to his Father, that he question'd whether he could execute his Orders. Upon this, the Duke return'd for Answer to him ; ' I order you to make

* 'Twas a Cross erected by the Soldiers of *Ferdinando Cortes*.

‘ yourself Master of *Haerlem*. If you will not obey
‘ me, I will go myself, gouty as I am, and conti-
‘ nue the Siege. If my Distemper disables me from
‘ Action, I will send to *Spain* for *Donna Innes*, your
‘ Mother and my Wife, to come and make herself
‘ Mistress of *Haerlem*: And I will never suffer that
‘ a Tower attack’d by my Son, shall be taken by
‘ any but him or his Parents.’ These two Pas-
sages relating to the Duke of *Alva*, have made me
drop the *Spanish* Historians; but I now return to
them.

Anthony de Herrera is one of the best of them;
and he has given us a good *History of America*. The
Spaniards have done what they could to suppress it,
because they don’t like his plain Account of the
horrid Cruelties which they so inhumanly exercised
in the new World. *Don Bartholomew de las Casas*,
another of their Historians, has done the same thing;
for which he is the more to be esteem’d, as he was
not only an Ecclesiastic, but a Friar, and because,
notwithstanding these two Characters, so much to
the Disadvantage of History, he has courageously got
the better of that cruel Prejudice of the Men of
those two Orders against all who have the Misfor-
tune not to think as they do. The Sincerity of these
two candid *Spaniards* has render’d their Works very
scarce; but they are translated into several Lan-
guages.

Mariana the Jesuit has wrote a very good History
of *Spain*; which he compos’d at first in *Latin*, and
afterwards translated into *Spanish*, but without keep-
ing too servilely to his Original. This is one of the
best Works of the kind that these Times have pro-
duc’d. There’s the same Majesty in it from the Be-
ginning to the End. In those fine Passages which
furnish the Author with ample Matter to display his
Eloquence, he never is too lavish of it, nor is he

too sparing of it in such Parts of the History as furnish him with Topics that are not so florid. The very Enemies of the Jesuits confess that *Mariana* was a great Historian. A Protestant has not scrupled to declare that he was superior to all the modern Historians that had wrote in the *Latin* Tongue, not only for the great Knowledge which he had in the Affairs of *Spain*, but for his Eloquence, the Simplicity of his Style, and his Freedom of Expression. But this very Man accuses the Jesuit for blaming the Princes whose Lives he wrote, and for sometimes censuring them too sarcastically *.

It cannot be deny'd that *Mariana* had shocking Notions of the Respect due to Sovereigns; and that several of the Maxims which he has maintained concerning the Obedience due from the Subjects, tend only to the Subversion of States, and to the Dethroning of Kings ever so well establish'd. 'Tis not in his History of *Spain* that these dangerous Opinions stand so barefac'd, but in another *Latin* Tract, *Of a King and his Institution*. He therein styles *James Clement*, who assassinated *Henry III.* *The everlasting Honour of France; Galliæ Decus æternum*. He endeavours all he can to justify that Monster †. But the Parliament of *Paris* caus'd the

Book

* Inter *Latinos* omnibus *Palmam* præripit *Johannes Mariana Hispanus*, *Rerum Hispanicarum* Cognitione nemini secundus. Valuit verò *Mariana* insigni Eloquentiâ, Prudentiâ, et magnâ Libertate dicendi. Hinc et Libertatis studiosissimus in Reges suos sæpe est mordax. *Herm. Conringius de Regno Hispaniæ*, apud *Pope Blount Censuræ Authorum*, p. 614.

† All Mankind, says this Jesuit, does not pass the same Construction upon the Action of the Friar (*Clement*). Many People there are that think it worthy of Immortality, and the highest Praise. *De Facto Monachi* (*Clementis*).

Book to be burnt by the common Hangman; and the Arret pass'd by that supreme Tribunal, has render'd the Memory not only of *Mariana*, but of all the Jesuits who have put their Opinions into Practice but too often, odious to all honest Men.

Of the great Number of Authors that have amus'd themselves in composing Romances, the illustrious and ingenious *Michael de Cervantes*, Author of *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha*, deserves the first Rank. The Works of that ingenious Writer have been, and always will be, the Delight and Admiration of all *Europe*: Yet 'tis not absolutely free from the Defect peculiar to his Country; and as he was by Birth a *Spaniard*, he could not help paying a Tribute to Superstition. He founds the Intrigue of one of the most charming Episodes in his Book upon the Conversation between a *Turkish* Woman and *Lela Maria*; and the *Madonna*, who is lugg'd in very preposterously, comes every Night to command her to go to *Spain*.

Matthew Aleman, Author of *The Life of Guzman d'Alferche*, tho' inferior to *Cervantes*, wrote nevertheless in a pure simple manner, both amusing and instructive; and his Romance may even do the more Good, because while he is strongly painting the Absurdities and Disorders of Civil Life, he makes it plain to Demonstration, that the End of them must be wretched. I don't mention the Life of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the Adventure of *Mark d'Obregon*, and twenty others of the like Stamp; because they are only wrote to relate the Lives of Beggars and Wretches, just as an infinite Number of sorry little *French* Romances are penn'd only with a View to

mentis) non una Opinio fuit; multius laudantibus, atque Immortalitate dignum judicantibus. Mariana de Rege et Regis Instit. lib. i. cap. vi.

tell certain foolish imaginary Adventures, and Sentiments ridiculously refin'd.

There's not a Country in the whole World where more Romances are writ than in *Spain*; nor one where there are any so bad. To be convinc'd of this, one need only attend to the ingenious and judicious Criticism of them by *Don Quixote's* Curate; and to the great Number of those that he condemned to the Flames, when he examin'd the Library of that unfortunate Knight. In all that Number, four or five are the most that escaped the secular Arm of the Barber and the Servant-Maid. *Amadis de Gaul* is one of those that finds Quarter, and the Curate praises it as the only one of its kind. *I have been told by great Men*, said he, *that 'tis the best Book we have of the sort.* But for one Romance that was spar'd how many others were thrown into the Fire? *Espandian the Son of Amadis de Gaul*; *Don Olivante de Laura*; *Florismart of Hyrcania*; *Don Platir*; the *Knight of the Cross*; the *Mirror of Knighthood*; *Barnardo del Carpio*; *Barnardo des Roncesvalles*; *Palmerin d'Oliua*; are all cast, without Mercy, into the Flames. *Palmerin of England*, and *Tirante the White*, are the only two Books that have the same good Fortune as *Amadis de Gaul*; the first as a Master-piece, worthy to be preserv'd in as rich a Box as *Alexander* found among the Spoils of *Darius*, and which serv'd to inclose the Works of *Homer*; the second as a diverting Book, and an excellent Antidote against the Spleen.

The *Spaniards* have almost as many Poets as Romance-Writers; but their good Authors of that kind are still more scarce. The ten Books of *The Fortune of Love*, compos'd by *Antony de Lofrasco*, a *Sardinian* Poet, are full of Wit and Spirit. The *Eclogues of Don Lopez Maldonat* may be compar'd
with

with those of *Virgil*; all their Fault being, that they are a little too tedious and too diffuse. His Songs seem to have been dictated by *Love*, and his Verses of Gallantry may be match'd with those of *Anacreon*. The *Araucana* of *Don Alonso d'Ercilla*; the *Austriada* of *Juan Ruffo*, and the *Montferrato* of *Christopher de Verves*, are, in the Opinion of *Michael de Cervantes*, the best Verses that ever were made in *Spanish*: And his Opinion was just; for really those Pieces are not inferior to any of the greatest Poets.

Don Lopes de la Vega wrote such excellent Comedies, that the great *Corneille* affirm'd he would have given up the two best of his Tragedies to have been Author of the Character of *Menteur*. Thou knowest that the *French* Poet compos'd his from the *Spanish* Original.

These, dear *Monceca*, out of so many Volumes that the Libraries of *Spain* consist of, are the only ones that deserve the Esteem of able Judges. One might add to them the Works of *Balthasar Gratian*, if they were more natural and less perplex'd. This Author has certainly very good things, especially in his *Criticon*, and his *Homme de Cour*; which are in my Opinion, his two best Pieces. But there too, as well as in his other Writings, one finds unnatural Ideas, and Expressions too far fetch'd, and too much strain'd.

Of all the *Spanish* Authors the Divines are the first in Rank; but these Writers have been so often disparaged, and thou thyself so well knowest the Chaos of Impertinences which their Works contain, that it would be to no Purpose for me to enter into a particular Detail of the Books with which they have overburden'd the Public. I don't believe that they can be more severely ridicul'd than they have been by the famous *Pascal*; who has
given

given many of them a mortal Wound; and since his *Provincial Letters* were publish'd, all *Europe* is convinced that the most absurd and most extravagant Questions are what the most of those Authors have applied themselves to.

I look upon the *Spanish* Divines in general as a Set of Men whom all the Hellebore of *Anticyra* could not cure*. They accustom themselves, from the time that they begin to study, to feed upon nothing but Chimeras: And they are crack-brain'd to such a Degree, that it would be more easy to restore the Hero of *Michael de Cervantes* to his Senses, than a Man infatuated with the Maxims of *Sanches*, *Suarez*, *Escobar*, *Tambourin*, and others of that Stamp.

Consider, dear *Monceca*, what a Crime it would be in *Spain*, if any one publicly maintain'd that all the Books of Knight-errantry are not so pernicious as one single scholastic Divine, to disturb and turn the strongest and the soundest Brain. I would rather almost be accus'd of the most heinous Crimes, than of having maintain'd such a Proposition. The Fire would no doubt be my Reward, and I should be detested by all the People; for the Inhabitants of this Country have such an implicit Veneration for every thing which comes from the Hands of the Monks, that they are the first to deify the Chimeras and Imaginations they are possess'd with.

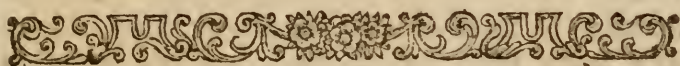
The *French Nazarenes* have a great many Divines; but their manner of Writing is quite different from that of the *Spaniards*. They take care to let nothing escape in their Works that is impertinent; and if sometimes they discuss matters which they do not very well understand, the Cau-

* Tribus Anticyris Caput insanabile.

Horat. de Arte Poet. v. 300.

tion with which they explain themselves, and the mild Terms they make use of, hinder them from falling into the Extravagancies of the *Spaniards*. There is almost as much Difference between a Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, and a Doctor of *Salamanca*, as between a grave Historian and a *Persian* Poet. The former explains things that are doubtful with great Modesty, charges many Passages which he cannot explain, upon the Weakness of the human Understanding; and he submits his Difficulties and his Doubts to the Orders of the Deity, when he cannot understand the Reason of them. The latter runs, like the *Persian* Poet, into gigantic and ridiculous Notions; he is willing to know and explain every thing; and not content with the Difficulties that occur in his Religion, he forms new ones to himself, which he resolves in a ridiculous manner, enough to destroy the strongest and best establish'd Faith.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers preserve thee!



L E T T E R C X I X.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Cairo,
formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople, to
AARON MONCECA.*

Dear MONCECA,

I Did not receive thy Letter from *Amsterdam* about the Difference of Languages, till some Days after I had answer'd thy former ones.

They

They who suppose that the *Hebrew* is the first and most antient of all Languages, have some Grounds, I believe, for their Opinion. For the same Reason I think it may be maintain'd, that 'tis to the Patriarchs we are oblig'd for the Invention of Letters, and that the *Greeks* and *Romans* had little Foundation for ascribing it to the antient *Phœnicians*.

Indeed it was to the celebrated *Cadmus* that *Greece* was oblig'd for the Art of Writing. But the *Hebrew* Language and Characters had been carry'd to Perfection long before; and when *Moses* wrote in *Hebrew*, the *Greeks* were still a barbarous People, like those that were discover'd two or three Ages ago in *America*. Some Writers have pretended that *Cadmus* was an *Egyptian*, and not a *Phœnician*. But this Objection does not at all affect the present Question; it being certain that the *Greeks*, before his time, were ignorant of the use of Characters: Consequently we must look elsewhere for the Invention of Writing. The Names which *Cadmus* gives to the Letters, are the same as those of the *Hebrew* Alphabet: It therefore follows from thence, that the Characters of it were already well known. But the Gratitude of the *Greeks* for the Favour they had receiv'd from their first Master, engag'd them to ascribe to him the Honour of having invented those very Letters which had been in Use among the *Hebrews* for a long time before.

The *Romans*, who receiv'd the Arts and Sciences, and Fables, from the *Greeks*, were also of Opinion that *Cadmus* was the Inventor of Writing. *Lucan* not only confirm'd that Opinion among his Contemporaries, but effectually transmitted it to Posterity; and such as did not care to go to the bottom of the Question, adher'd blindly to that Author's Decision. The happy and elegant Manner of his expressing his Sentiments, and the excellent Translation of his
beau-

beautiful Verses by another able Pen, have also very much contributed to establish that Opinion, and to render it common. As there are few Scholars but have by heart this Passage in *Lucan* ;

*Phænices primi (Famæ si credimus) ausi
Mansuram rudibus Vocem signare Figuris.*

i. e.

Fame reports that the *Phœnicians* were the first that ventur'd to make dumb Characters speak.

So there are are few *Frenchmen* that are ignorant of these Verses of *Brebeuf* :

*C'est de lui que nous vient cet Art ingenieux
De peindre la Parole, et de parler aux Yeux ;
Et par les Traits divers de Figures tracées,
Donner de la Couleur et du Corps aux Pensées.*

i. e.

To him we owe the ingenious Art of painting, Speech, and speaking to the Eyes, and of giving Colour, and even Body, to the Thoughts of Men, by certain Characters represented in various Shapes.

Thus, dear *Monceca*, do the most evident Errors often find general Credit in Mens Minds, and are receiv'd as certain Truths. No body has, to my thinking, better confuted this false Opinion than an able Doctor among the *Nazarenes*. 'Tis demonstrable, says he, that the Greeks did not give the Alphabet to the Hebrews (but that the former rather receiv'd it from the latter) because those Names which in Greek have no Signification, have in the Hebrew a Meaning, as is observ'd by *Plutarch* : Consequently they are barbarous Terms with regard to the Greeks, and natural to the Hebrews *.

* See the Art of Speaking; or, The Rhetoric of Father *Lami*, cap. xix. p. 106.

Another Proof is, that the *Greeks* making use of the Alphabet in Computation, when they left off the Use of some of the *Hebrew* Characters for keeping up the Value of the others, they substituted a new Sign in the Place of the antient Letter that was suppress'd. For Example; after having rejected the *Vau*, which is the *Æolic* Digamma, and the Letter *F* of the *Latins*, they put in its place this Mark ϵ , to denote the Number 6, of which the *Hebrew* *Vau* is the Sign; it being the sixth Letter of the *Hebrew* Alphabet.

These, dear *Monceca*, are plain Proofs of the Antiquity of the *Hebrew* Characters; and perhaps it might be suppos'd that *Adam*, who had been created with Dispositions proper to contrive and perfect the Arts, did first find out the Secret of Writing, and made use of various Signatures to communicate his Ideas. Perhaps he had at first but a certain Quantity of them, and that they were increas'd in Proportion as Mankind multiply'd. This however is certain, that we must seek for the Original of Writing among the first Patriarchs; and consequently 'tis but natural to suppose that the *Hebrew* having been the first Language of Mankind, the Characters and Letters of that Language were also the first that were made use of.

The manner of writing the old *Hebrew*, and which continu'd even one hundred Years after the Emperor *Constantine* I. is another Confirmation of this Conjecture. There was no such thing as Pointing known, nor was there any Vowel distinguish'd upon the Paper; evident Proofs of the very great Simplicity of a Language, and also of its Antiquity. Some *Frenchmen* to whom I talk'd of this, while I was at *Constantinople*, were very much astonish'd at it. They could not imagine how it was possible to understand a Word of which only
half

half of the Letters was express'd ; and I had much
 ado to convince them that the Points which stand
 for Vowels in the *Hebrew*, were only necessary to
 make the reading of *Hebrèw* Books easy to those
 who do not understand the Language. After a great
 deal of Difficulty and Plague, I did at length con-
 vince them how it was possible to be done, by
 making them read a Letter, penn'd by a Woman,
 in which there was not one Word written true.
 ' You read this Writing, *said I to them*, without
 ' any Difficulty. You have no regard to the Letters
 ' which are superfluous ; and you supply those which
 ' are wanting, without the least Hesitation. How
 ' comes this about ? 'Tis because your Knowledge
 ' of the *French* Tongue gives you such a Read-
 ' ness in it, that you scarce see the Want of
 ' some Letters, the Superfluity of others, and the
 ' Wrong-placing of almost all. Why will you not
 ' believe that the Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Lan-
 ' guage gives us the same Advantage, and makes
 ' us Amends by those Points which with us form
 ' Vowels, and were only contriv'd when all the
 ' *Jews*, our Brethren, had forgot their Mother-
 ' tongue, and when there was an absolute Necessity
 ' to remedy that Inconvenience, for enabling them
 ' to read our sacred Books ?

I approve thy Opinion therefore, dear *Monceca*,
 and believe that the *Hebrew* Tongue is the most an-
 tient, and the Root from whence all the others are
 deriv'd ; but I can't agree to what thou say'st, that
 it would have been impossible for Men to have
 form'd a Language to themselves, if God had not
 created them, and if they had sprung out of the
 Earth, as is maintain'd by certain Philosophers. I am
 very far from a Thought of favouring their impious
 Opinions ; but I think it may be affirm'd, that if
 Men (which I assert to be an Impossibility) had been
 form'd

form'd by chance, they would have contriv'd some kind of Language whereby to communicate their Thoughts to one another.

Thou seemest to differ widely from this Opinion, and think'st it probable, ' That if they could not ' have understood one another absolutely as soon as ' they were born, instead of staying together, and ' endeavouring to unite, and form Societies, they ' would have wander'd in the Woods like the Animals, and would never have endeavour'd, by common Consent, to annex certain Ideas to certain Sounds *.'

It will be easy for thee, dear *Monceca*, to see thy Mistake, if thou dost but consider the Temper of Mankind, which is naturally inclin'd to Society with one another, by an innate Instinct. Undoubtedly those new Creatures whom the Philosophers raise out of the Earth, and to whom they grant the Endowments and Talents of human Beings, would make it their first Business to form Words †. They would

* See Letter CVIII.

† At varios Linguæ Sonitus Natura subegit
Mittere ; et Utilitas expressit Nomina Rerum,
Non Aliâ longe Ratione, atque ipsa videtur
Protrahere ad Gestum Pueros Infantia Linguæ,
Cum facit, ut Digito, quæ sint præsentia monstrent.
Sentit enim Vim quisque suam, quam possit abuti.
Cornua nata prius vitulo quàm Frontibus extent ;
Illis iratus petit, atque insensus inurget.
At Catuli Pantherarum, Scymnique Leonum
Unguibus ac Pedibus jam tum, Morసుque repugnant,
Vix dum cum ipsis sunt Dentes Unguesque creati.
Alituum porrò Genus Alis omne videmus
Fidere, et à pennis tremulum petere Auxiliatum.
Proinde putare aliquem tum Nomina distribuisse
Rebus, et inde Homines didicisse Vocabula prima,
Desipere est. Nam cur Hic posset cuncta notare
Vocibus,

would seriously study to find out Sounds that might help them to convey their Ideas to one another. Suppose one Person only gave the same Name to a Thing several times; it would have been sufficient. The Person who should happen to have any Business with him, or the Woman to whom Nature should incline his Attachment, would soon attribute that very Word to the same Thing. Two Persons easily impart their Thoughts to one another by the most unaccountable Sounds, when once they have agreed what Ideas to affix to those Sounds. 'Tis true, that Men would at first have had very few Words to express their Notions, if they had been

Vocibus, et varios Sonitus emittere Linguae,
Tempore eodem alii facere id non quisse putentur?
Lucret. *de Rer. Nat.* lib. v. ver. 1027, &c.

Thus translated by Mr. Creech.

' Kind Nature Pow'r of framing Sounds affords
 ' To Man; and then Convenience taught us Words:
 ' As Infants now, for want of Words, devise
 ' Expressive Signs: They speak with Hands and Eyes; }
 ' Their speaking Hand the Want of Words supplies. }
 ' All know their Pow'rs; they are by Nature shown: }
 ' Thus tender Calves with naked Front will run, }
 ' And fiercely push before their Horns are grown. }
 ' Young Lions shew their Teeth, prepare their Paws; }
 ' The Bears young Cubs unsheath their crooked Claws, }
 ' While yet their Nails are young, and soft their Jaws. }
 ' The Birds strait use their Wings, on them rely;
 ' And soon as Dangers press, they strive to fly.
 ' Besides; that One the Names of Things contriv'd,
 ' And that from him their Knowledge all deriv'd,
 ' 'Tis fond to think: For how could that Man tell }
 ' The Names of Things, or lisp a Syllable, }
 ' And not another Man do so as well? ' }

under a Necessity of intirely inventing a Language. But as 'tis natural for People to makè use of their first Knowledge, they would have perfected their Language in Proportion as they aim'd to explain the things that should occur to their Minds. Besides, a small Number of Terms is sufficient to form the Beginnings of a Language; and when once the primitive Words are found out 'tis an easy Matter to multiply those Words without much Alteration or Addition. The Language of the *Georgians* is remarkable for this extraordinary Simplicity. ' All
 ' the Names deriv'd from the Primitives differ only
 ' in this Termination *jani*. If they are Names of
 ' Dignity, Offices, or any Art, the Derivatives add
 ' *me* to the Primitives. By placing the Syllable
 ' *sa* before the Name of a Thing, they form a
 ' Derivative, which denotes the Place of it: Thus
 ' *Thredi* signifies a Dove, and *Sathredi* a Dove-
 ' house; *Chueli* Cheese, and *Sachueli* the Place
 ' where 'tis kept *.'

Thou art not insensible, dear *Monceca*, that it would have been very easy for Men naturally inclin'd to communicate their Thoughts to one another, and having the Facility of forming Variety of Sounds, soon to invent a Language copious enough to give them the Means of understanding one another, and of forming Societies; and that such Societies would afterwards give Birth to those different Languages, to which every one would have added new Words, and would perhaps have insensibly abandon'd the old ones, as we see has happen'd in our Time in the politest States. Thou can'st not but own, that the *French* which is now spoke at *Paris*, is very different from that which was spokè

* See Father *Lami's* Art of Speaking, *lib. i. cap. vii.*
 p. 31.

three hundred Years ago. From this first Language those call'd the Mother-tongues would have been form'd, and those would have produc'd others.

Thou perceivest therefore, dear *Monceca*, that the System of the atheistical Philosophers is only absurd in their Notion that Men are Mushrooms, that spring up in one Night out of the Earth, and not in their Opinion that Men form'd a Language of their own; which, tho' 'tis certain they have not done, yet 'tis as certain, on the other hand, they might have done.

From the Facility with which Men might have form'd a Language, I argue by consequence, that *Adam* had perhaps at first no Notion of Writing, and that it was not invented till afterwards, and perhaps not till after the Death of that first Patriarch. Nevertheless it might have been known to him, and he might have discover'd it by the single Aid of Reflection. Many Philosophers pretend that *Adam* had Science infus'd into him. For my part, I don't see where was the Necessity that God should grant him this Gift. 'Tis my Opinion that he had only the Means of cultivating those Sciences of which he had the first Seeds in him; and 'tis apparent, that since Men might have form'd a Language to themselves, if they had sprung out of the Ground; with much more Reason might they have found out Characters to be the Signs of such Language.

The *Americans* had Figures and Marks to signify certain things. When the *Spaniards* first arriv'd in *Mexico*, *Montezuma*, the King of that barbarous Country sent a certain Number of Writers, or rather Painters, to meet them, who, by certain Lines and Figures, which they drew upon great Pieces of Callico, exactly described what they saw. This sort of Characters was answerable to the antient Hie-

roglyphics of the *Egyptians*, and every Figure stood for one or more Words.

'Tis natural to suppose that Writing was not invented all at once, but by Degrees; and that it was improv'd to Perfection in the same manner as Language, in proportion to the Number of the different Ideas which Mankind was desirous of communicating. All the Arts have been produc'd the same way. If we may credit the Story, we are oblig'd for Carving and Painting to a Lady in Love, whose Beloved going to leave her for some time, Love put this Stratagem into her Head, to mitigate her Grief for his Absence. She drew with a Pencil upon a Wall, the Out-lines of her Lover's Figure; and this lifeless Shade was what gave the first Hint to Painting and Sculpture. This grotesque Image, the Produce of Love and Chance, was admir'd; and every Woman was desirous to draw her Lover's Portraiture in the same manner. The Men too, in their Turn, were desirous to have some faint Resemblance of their Mistresses. And from a thing which seem'd but a Trifle, they came at last, as it were, to put Life into Cloth, and to make a flat Superficies appear to the View as if it were rais'd.

Without having recourse therefore to *Adam's* inspir'd Knowledge, one may find the Source of all the Sciences in mere Chance, and in the Passion which is natural to Mankind to find out what may be useful to them, and to perfect it when they have got the least Glimpse of it.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers prosper thee in abundance.

LETTER



L E T T E R CXX.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Lisbon, *to*
AARON MONCECA, *at* Hamburg.

THE Manners of the *Portuguese* are not surprising, dear *Monceca*, to a Man that has been for a Time in *Spain*, where one is accusom'd beforehand to see a People that are proud, superstitious, and devoted to the Monks. When I arriv'd at *Lisbon*, I scarce perceiv'd any Difference but in the Vivacity of the *Portuguese* Disposition. They may be consider'd as the *Gascons* of *Spain*; and they are as self-conceited, and have almost as much Fire and Genius, as the Inhabitants of the Neighbourhood of the *Garonne*. They are not near so grave as the *Spaniards*, but are equally as vain, if not more so. If we may believe them, there is not one of 'em, but can of himself beat a whole Army of *Spaniards*. *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, *Tamerlane*, *Mahomet II.* *Henry IV.* and *Charles XII.* were mere Poltrons compar'd to the *Portuguese* private Soldiers, who think themselves so many Heroes. The *Spaniards*, as may well be imagin'd, don't care to acknowledge this surprising Valour. They pretend, on the contrary, that one *Castilian* is enough to put the whole Kingdom of *Portugal* to Flight;

*Et qu' il n'est aucun d'eux, que le Ciel n'ait fait naître,
Pour régir les Mortals, et leur parler en maître.*

i. e.

And that there's not a Man of 'em but is form'd
by Heaven to govern and to controul Mankind.

In a Dispute of much Importance, may we not make use of History to decide this Question? The *Spaniards* were a long time Masters of the *Portuguese*; and had it not been for the Cardinal *de Richelieu*, perhaps *Lisbon* would still have been subject to *Madrid*. *Philip II.* not only conquer'd all *Portugal* in the twinkling of an Eye, but his Successors preserv'd it for near 60 Years; and those are bad Epochas for the *Portuguese*. 'Tis true, that their Country is so inconsiderable, compar'd to that of the *Spaniards*, that there's no judging from thence which is the most valorous. Be this as it will, it happens to be a great Point of Controversy. As long as there are *Portuguese*, they will pretend to be braver than the *Spaniards*; and these will, in all Appearance, pretend to be braver than the *Portuguese* till Doomsday. 'Tis a difficult matter for two Nations so vain-glorious ever to admit of any sort of Equality betwixt them.

So strong is the Hatred and Jealousy between the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*, that they can't bear to own those Qualities in their Adversaries which are the most praise-worthy, and the most important: And we ought to be equally diffident of the Characters given by either Nation of the other; for where two Persons are at Law, would one expect to find the Right and Title of either in the Memorials of the adverse Party?

When I was at *Madrid*, I was told a Story of an Officer, which may give thee an Idea of *Spanish Rhodomontades*. During the last War, when the *French* enter'd *Spain*, to place *Philip V.* upon that Throne, the *Portuguese*, thou know'st, had embrac'd the Party of *Charles III.* The Conde d' *Atalaya*, a Gentleman of this Nation, who commanded a Detachment of *German* Forces, on the Frontiers of *Portugal*, sent a Summons to a *Spanish* Officer,
who

who was intrench'd with 30 Men, to surrender. The latter return'd an Answer by a great Volley of Shot, and defended himself with extraordinary Valour; but at last the *Germans* forc'd him in his Post; and after having taken him Prisoner, carry'd him before the *Conde d'Atalaya*. *Who advis'd you,* said the *Conde*, *to pretend to stand out with 30 Men against 400? Are you not sensible that I ought to punish you severely for that Rashness of yours, which has occasion'd the Loss of so many good Lives?* The *Spaniard* attended very coolly to what the *Conde* said; but was so nettled at the manner in which he spoke, that he made him this Answer: *Excuse me; I did not know I had to do with Germans; for I thought I had only to fight with 400 Portuguese.* The *Conde* thought it a very impertinent Answer, and was heartily inclin'd to have us'd the Officer very ill: But the *Germans* representing to him what might be the Consequence of such Violence, and that they ought to be civil to the Officer, for fear of a Reprizal, the *Spaniard* came off without any other Mortification than the Disgrace of being a Prisoner.

Be the *Portuguese* ever so haughty, yet they are altogether as much in subjection to the Monks, who have even more Authority here than in *Spain*. The Inquisition is also more severe here. Woe be to those that fall into its Hands! One thing which will surprize thee, dear *Monceca*, is, that notwithstanding this so severe and cruel a Tribunal, there is still so great a Number of conceal'd *Jews* in *Portugal*: And I have been assur'd, that among the wealthiest and most distinguish'd men in *Lisbon*, there is still a great Number of *Israelites*, true to the Faith of their Fathers.

I dare not make my Enquiry into things of this Nature here, too public; for, notwithstanding the

Character with which I am vested by my Commission, I make no Profession of my Religion. For my greater Security, I disguise my Sentiments, because the Power of the Inquisitors is so great in this Country, that perhaps the Royal Authority could not screen me from their Hatred and their Fury. I pass at *Lisbon* for an Envoy from the Republic of *Genoa*, and every body, except the Ministers, takes me for a *Nazarene*; but I did not think it proper to keep it a Secret from them, that, in case of Need, I might be sure of their Protection. Mean time, I make all the Dispatch I can in my Affairs. I am not easy in this Country, and, Thanks to the God of *Israel*! I hope to leave it very soon; for I have not many things to do. After so tedious a Voyage I long to return to *Constantinople*, to be with my dear Family; and I fancy that thou must have the same Desire. But since thou art not yet able to return to thy Kindred, endeavour to banish the Thought from thee which may possibly disturb what Pleasures thou takest. If thy Travels are more tedious than mine, thou wilt feel the greater Satisfaction when they are at an End. The more Trouble we are at for any Happiness, the dearer it is to us; and I declare to thee, dear *Monceca*, that I should have been extremely sorry if I had not made a Tour through some Part of *Europe*. Notwithstanding the Plague I have had in my Travels, I have, however, learned to know Mankind, and reflect upon their Whimsies.

Portugal is but a barren Field for a Philosopher to perfect his Discoveries in, the People here being intirely ignorant of what is called sound Philosophy. *Aristotle*, or rather his Commentators, are privileg'd in this Country to contend with common Sense and Reason. *Des Cartes* and *Newton* are here reckon'd the Tools of *Satan*, and their Works pass
for

for the Productions of Hell, or but little better. There are, perhaps, some private Men, who read the Writings of those Philosophers, but they are very few ; and the Monks publicly condemn them.

Though the *Portuguese* are wretched Philosophers, yet they cultivate the Sciences. There's an Academy at *Lisbon*, which consists of some Men of very good Learning. The liberal Arts are protected and encourag'd by the King, who receives all Foreigners very kindly, that are capable of contributing to their Improvement ; and it may truly be said, that the Sciences are much better cultivated in *Portugal* than *Spain*. But to what Purpose should any Man desire the Attainment of them ? As long as the Mind is under Captivity and Restraint, there never can be Men of true Learning in *Portugal*. At the first Discovery which they should make, they would be serv'd as the unfortunate *Galileo* was, and perhaps rot in a Goal. Oh ye Monks ! Ye Plagues of Mankind ! Ye Scourge which Heaven gave to Man in his Wrath ! When is it that the Deity will, in pity to unhappy Mortals, put an End to your miserable Race ! If thou did'st but see, dear *Monceca*, how insolent they are in this Country, thou wouldst be surpris'd at the Blindness of those who permit and patronize it.

The *Recollets* are the Friars that bear the greatest Sway here. They are the Heroes of Gallantry. Their Sandals are ty'd with Ribbands green, blue, red, or yellow, according to the Colour of the Liveries of the Ladies whom they gallant. These Ladies are they that take care to equip the reverend Fathers with Shoes and Stockings ; and there is not one of these Friars but has his dear *Dulcinea*, to whom he pays his Vows. The other Monks are altogether as gallant ; and to be fortunate in an Amour at *Lisbon*, 'tis absolutely necessary to put on a Cowl.

The *Portuguese* are in general better turn'd for Trade than the *Spaniards*; and in their Harbours there is a very great Number of foreign Ships. The *English* especially drive a considerable Traffic there; and many of them are settled in the Country, where they enjoy several Privileges.

'Tis very much the Interest of the *Portuguese* to be upon good Terms with the *English*; and the latter, perhaps, find it as much theirs to be Friends with the *Portuguese*; the Cause and Principle of which Union is *Spain*; for as *England* does not care that the said Power should aggrandize itself, the Interests of *Portugal* and those of *England* are consequently the same.

Before the Republic of the *United Provinces* was form'd, the *Portuguese* had much more considerable Dominions in the *Indies* than they have at present. While they were Subjects of the Monarchy of *Spain*, they lost great Part of the Conquests which they had made in those distant Countries, by the Wars betwixt that Crown and the *United Provinces*. Nevertheless, they have still very considerable Settlements there, both in the *East* and *West Indies*; and *Lisbon* is one of the most trading and wealthy Cities in the World.

The Women of this Country, in general, are as beautiful and well-shap'd, as the Men are ugly, ordinary and clumsy. Consequently the Fair-Sex is debarr'd all manner of Freedom; for the *Portuguese* are even more jealous than the *Spaniards*. Their Women are more Slaves to them than Wives: They go out very seldom, and the higher they are in Rank, the greater is their Unhappiness. The Jealousy of their Husbands is so violent, that they have little Chapels built in their Palaces, that they may not have the Liberty of going to the Churches; wherein they resemble the rich *Mahometans*, who have Bagnio's
made

made in their own Houses, that their Wives may not have the Opportunity to ramble abroad, under Pretence of going to the public Baths.

To this Restraint, which the Fair-Sex in *Portugal* is kept under, are owing a great many Crimes unknown in other Countries. The Heat of the Climate, and that Confinement, which is only a Whet to Desire, make them break all Bounds; and it very often happens that a Friar is the Gallant of his own Sister; for, as to the horrid Crime, which is the Consequence of such abominable Conversation, the *Portuguese* look upon it as a mere *Peccadillo*, for which they can get Absolution by only making a Voyage to *Rome*. The Length of the Way, and the Fatigue of the Passage, are but little Check to their Lust; and, if we may believe the scandalous Chronicle, Incest is very common in *Portugal*. What is certain, is, that among those who rub the Marble at *Rome*, upon the Stairs of St. *Peter's* Dome, which is the Penance injoin'd for Crimes of this Nature, there are ten *Portuguese* to one of any other Nation.

Thou wilt easily imagine, dear *Monceca*, that Foreigners are at some Loss for Amusement, in a Country where the Women are so watch'd, and where Jealousy is so wakeful. All the Diversion that Gentlemen can have here, is to loiter all Day in some pitiful Coffee-houses, or wretched Taverns or Cabarets, which swarm with Whores grown old in Debauchery; and into whose Hands 'tis almost as dangerous for a Stranger to fall, as for one of our Brethren to fall into those of the Inquisition.

A Man must have Business at *Lisbon* to detain him there long; otherwise he will soon be tir'd with that kind of Life, which he is oblig'd to lead here. The *Portuguese* commonly stay at home, and never stir out but for their Business. Their Houses are almost as strictly watch'd as the *Turks* Seraglio's; so

that 'tis impossible for a Foreigner, how amiable or rational soever, to expect agreeable Conversation in this Country. The very King's Court has an Air of Constraint and Confinement, and every thing passes there with a Gravity, directed and regulated by Jealousy. The Women go to the Queen's Court dress'd richly, and cover'd with Jewels; but they are so narrowly observ'd there, that 'tis almost impossible for them to find an Opportunity to punish their Husbands for the Slavery in which they keep them.

Nevertheless 'tis true, that in spite of all their Precautions, it sometimes happens, that Love surmounts all Obstacles. 'Tis necessary, for this Purpose, to use so much Industry, to be so well acquainted with the Maxims of the Country, that 'tis impossible for a Foreigner ever to be happy with a Woman of Rank; this being the utmost that a Man can expect, who is born and bred in the Country.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*; live content and happy; and prosper in all thy Undertakings.

End of the Third Volume.





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